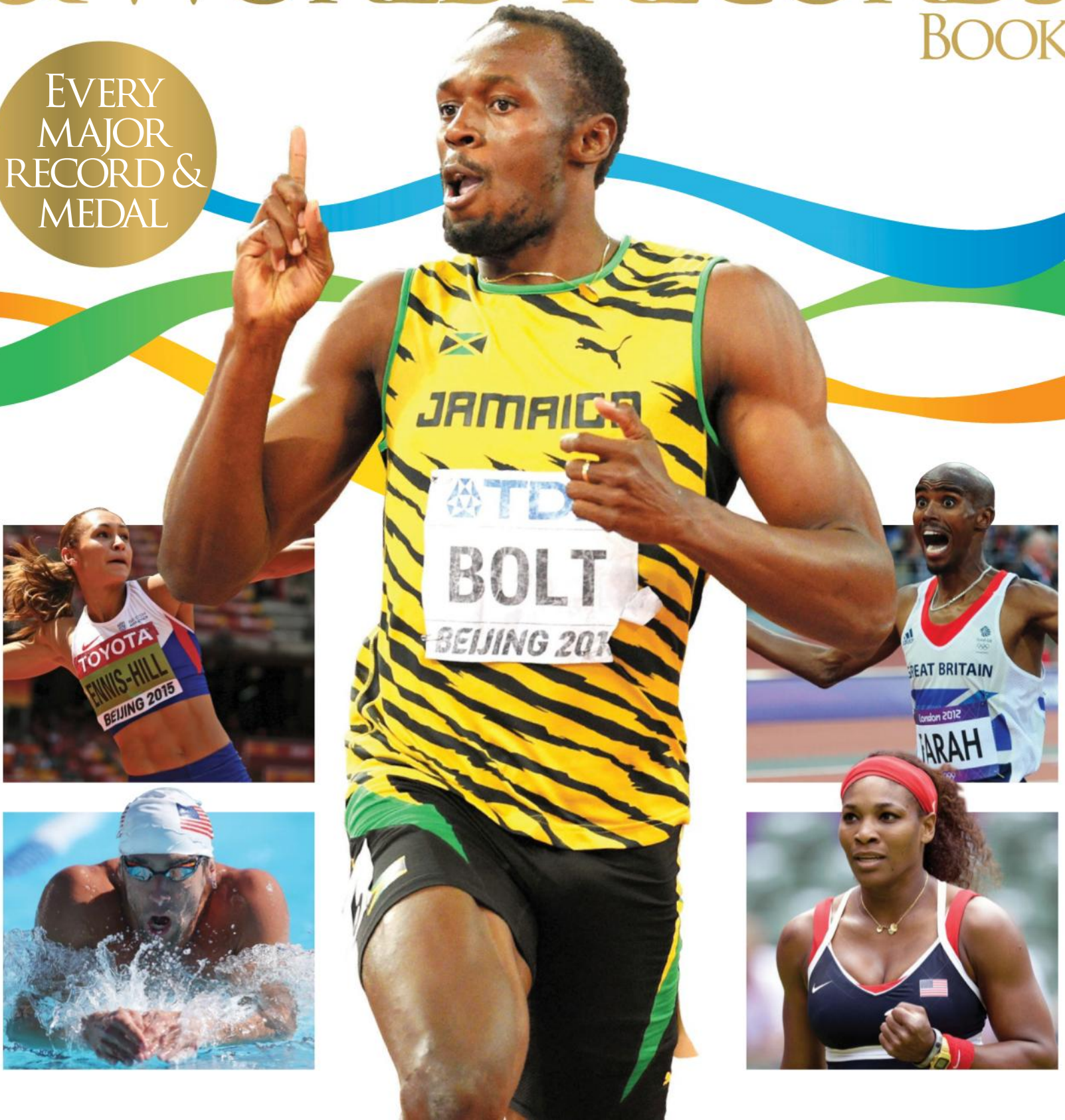


THE **NEW** OLYMPIC  
& WORLD RECORDS  
BOOK

EVERY  
MAJOR  
RECORD &  
MEDAL







# THE OLYMPIC & WORLD RECORDS BOOK



In Athens in 1896, a small group of fewer than 250 athletes competed in the first iteration of the modern Olympic Games. What started as relatively small-scale competition has since evolved into the biggest sporting event in the world, drawing tens of thousands of competitors from hundreds of nations together every four years, with the 2016 games in Rio de Janeiro promising to be the most spectacular yet.

The Olympics are where the world's elite athletes compete at the very highest level, setting records and pushing the limits of the human body for the chance to claim the greatest accolade of all – an Olympic gold medal. In this book, we celebrate the greatest Olympians in every discipline, from athletics and aquatics to cycling, gymnastics, ball sports and more. Inside you'll find record-breaking achievements from throughout the history of the games, incredible stats and figures on the most dominant athletes of all time, and the amazing stories behind some of the most inspirational Olympic performances ever.





# THE OLYMPIC & WORLD RECORDS BOOK

Imagine Publishing Ltd  
Richmond House  
33 Richmond Hill  
Bournemouth  
Dorset BH2 6EZ  
☎ +44 (0) 1202 586200

Website: [www.imagine-publishing.co.uk](http://www.imagine-publishing.co.uk)

Twitter: @Books\_Imagine

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ImagineBookazines](https://www.facebook.com/ImagineBookazines)

**Publishing Director**

Aaron Asadi

**Head of Design**

Ross Andrews

**Editor in Chief**

Jon White

**Production Editor**

Ross Hamilton

**Written by**

Keir Radnedge

**Senior Art Editor**

Greg Whitaker

**Art Editor**

Ali Innes

**Cover images**

Getty

**Printed by**

William Gibbons, 26 Planetary Road, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XT

**Distributed in the UK, Eire & the Rest of the World by**

Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU

Tel 0203 787 9060 [www.marketforce.co.uk](http://www.marketforce.co.uk)

**Distributed in Australia by**

Gordon & Gotch Australia Pty Ltd, 26 Rodborough Road, Frenchs Forest, NSW 2086, Australia

Tel +61 2 9972 8800 [www.gordongotch.com.au](http://www.gordongotch.com.au)

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The content in this book has appeared previously in the Carlton book Olympic And World Records.

**The Olympic & World Records Book** © 2016 Imagine Publishing Ltd

ISBN 978 1785 463 457



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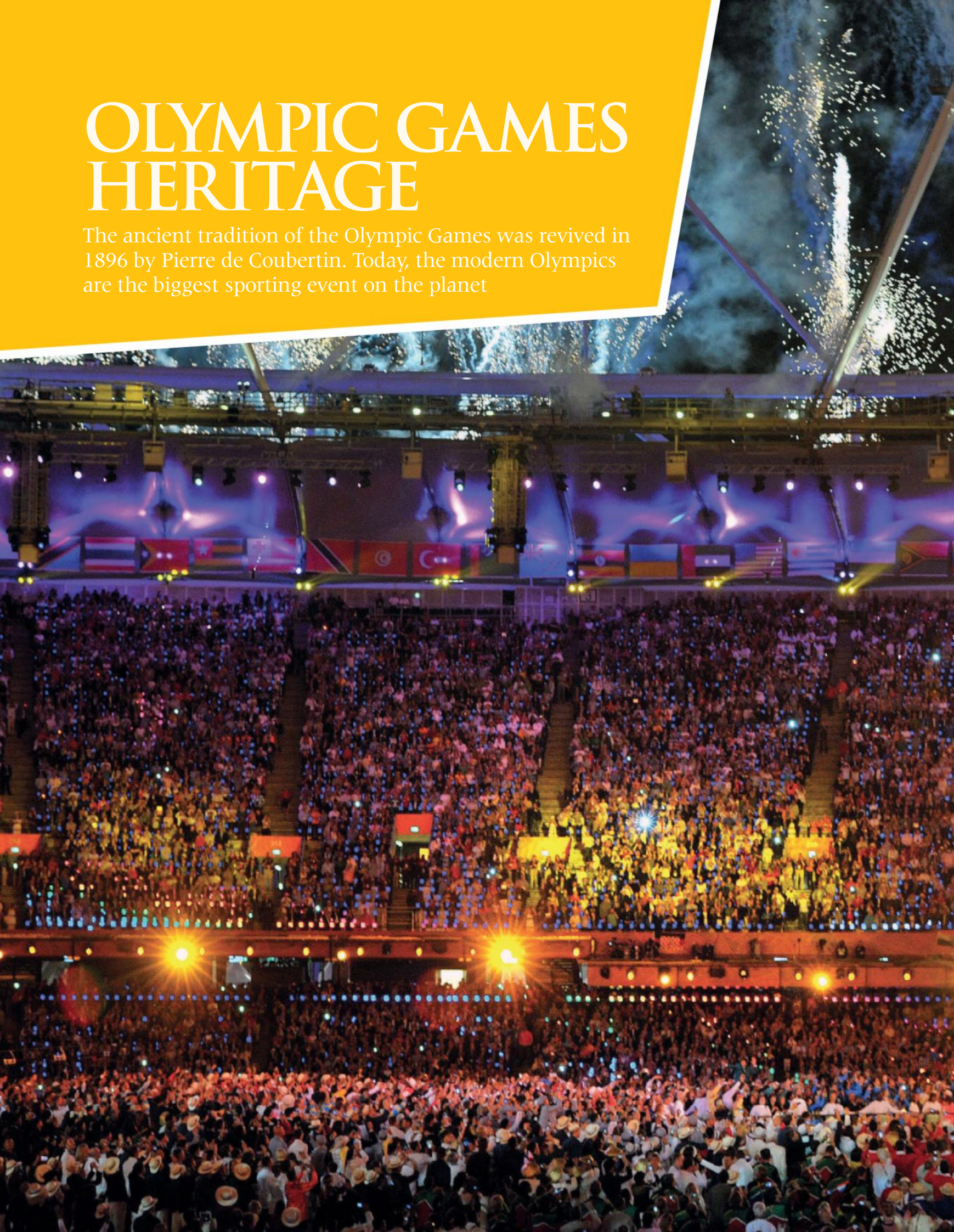


← (Clockwise from top left): Carl Lewis, Isabell Werth, Teofilo Stevenson, Jessica Ennis-Hill, Im Dong-Hyun, Matthias Steiner, Steve Redgrave, Steffi Graf, Nadia Comaneci, Lionel Messi, Chris Hoy and Michael Phelps.



# OLYMPIC GAMES HERITAGE

The ancient tradition of the Olympic Games was revived in 1896 by Pierre de Coubertin. Today, the modern Olympics are the biggest sporting event on the planet







← The London 2012 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony delivered a magnificent spectacle involving history, humour, music, dance and an incredible show to light the Olympic Cauldron.



# OLYMPIC GAMES STADIUMS

The word 'stadium' takes its name from the ancient length of the same name in Latin. This was the length of the track or the equivalent of 180 metres. At the Olympic Games of antiquity held in Olympia, sporting contests took place in conjunction with a religious festival. The stadium was next door to the temple.

## ATHENS 1896 AND 2004

The centrepiece of the 1896 Games was the Panathenaic Stadium, a marble structure built in the fourth century BC. Greek benefactor Georgios Averof paid for the renovation. Shaped almost like a horseshoe, with spectators seated on three sides, the running track featured tight turns at either end. To the delight of the crowd, Spiridon Louis of Greece came home to win the first Olympic Marathon. At the 2004 Games, the stadium again staged the finish of the Marathon, as well as Archery.

↓ *Crowds gather for the Opening Ceremony at the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens ahead of the 1896 Games, the first of the modern era.*



## MELBOURNE 1956

Melbourne Cricket Ground was the main centre for the 1956 Olympic Games and hosted Athletics, the Football final and a demonstration event, Australian Rules Football. Built in 1853 as a base for the Melbourne Cricket Club, it staged the first cricket Test match in 1877 and is today also home to a number of Australian Rules Football, Rugby Union and Rugby League teams in the Melbourne area.



↑ *The White City Stadium in west London was the all-purpose venue for the 1908 Olympic Games.*

## LONDON 1908 AND 1948

The stadium used for the London 1908 Games was originally called the Great Stadium, but it soon became known as White City. It featured cycling and running tracks and even a swimming pool on the infield and offered a legacy ahead of its time, staging athletics, rugby league, football, speedway and greyhound racing before it closed in the mid-1980s. London joined Paris in hosting a second Summer games in 1948, when Wembley Stadium was the main venue. King George VI declared the Games open, 26 years after he had laid the stadium's first foundation stone. Dutch housewife Fanny Blankers-Koen dominated the headlines, winning four gold medals on a cinder track.

## BERLIN 1936

A giant bell tolled above Berlin's Olympic Stadium to welcome the world to the 1936 Olympic Games. Designed by Werner March, the stadium was monumental in design and held more than 100,000 in its heyday. The first Olympic Flame brought by relay from Olympia burned here. Adolf Hitler declared the Games open, but the star was Jesse Owens, who won four gold medals on the track. The stadium formed part of an overall sports complex. The Olympic swimming pool was next door and vast gymnastic displays were held on the Maifeld, an arena behind the stadium.

## BARCELONA 1992

The Estadi Montjuic in Barcelona was built on a hill overlooking the city with the 1936 Olympic Games in mind. However, Barcelona lost out to Berlin in the IOC vote in 1931. When the city was finally chosen to host the 1992 Olympic Games, the interior was completely renovated, while the impressive facade was maintained.





↑ Rio de Janeiro's Maracana.

## RIO DE JANEIRO 2016

The Rio Games will stage 28 sports featuring 306 medal events – a massive logistical and infrastructural challenge. The programme features a staggering 10,500 competitors from 206 countries and also includes two restored sports in Golf and Rugby Union Sevens. This has meant the construction and/or redevelopment of 34 competition venues: nine new, 18 redeveloped or adapted and seven temporary, plus four outside Rio for Football (Salvador, Brasilia, Belo Horizonte and Sao Paulo). The Rio venues are spread across four city regions: Barra da Tijuca, Deodoro, Maracana and Copacabana. The Athletes Village is in Barra da Tijuca, while the Maracana zone features not only the Football venue, but also Athletics at the Olympic Stadium.

## HELSINKI 1952

The stadium used for the Helsinki 1952 Games pays homage to Finland's athletics heritage. Visitors are greeted by a giant statue of long-distance runner Paavo Nurmi, the 'Flying Finn', who lit the Olympic Flame in the stadium at the start of the Games.

## MUNICH 1972

Munich's Olympiastadion, built for the 1972 Games, has a futuristic roof made of self-cleaning acrylic glass plates. With a surface area of 75,000 square metres, it offers a unique and dramatic tented effect. Two years after the Games, the stadium was used for the 1974 World Cup final.

**“THE RIO VENUES ARE SPREAD ACROSS FOUR CITY REGIONS: BARRA DA TIJUCA, DEODORO, MARACANA AND COPACABANA”**

## BEIJING 2008

Dubbed the 'Bird's Nest' by locals and visitors alike, Beijing's Olympic Stadium was constructed using 45,000 tonnes of steel. During the Games, it held 91,000 and hosted Athletics and the men's Football final. A complex system of steel wires above the stadium made possible some spectacular displays, none more than when gymnast Ning Li soared through the air to light the Olympic Flame on the stadium roof.

➔ Built at a cost of US\$423 million, the Bird's Nest Stadium was the magnificent focal point of the Beijing 2008 Games.





## HOST CITIES

The battle to host an Olympic Games is a long and, for the victors, a rewarding one. London, which in 2012 was the first city to have the honour of hosting the Games three times, promised a regeneration of the local area and a legacy for young and aspiring sports people. Host Cities always leave their own individual stamp on the Games and create sporting memories that last a lifetime.

### LONGEST GAMES

The London 1908 Olympic Games were the longest in history. They began on 27 April at Queen's Club, in West Kensington, when Evan Baillie Noel won the first gold medal in Racquets. They came to an end on the last day of October, when England won the Hockey final. They included a strange mixture of events including Ice Skating, Motor Boating, Lacrosse, Rugby Union and even Tug of War.

### POLITICAL CHANGE

Berlin was awarded the 1936 Games five years earlier, before the Nazis came to power. A bitter critic of the Olympic Movement, Adolf Hitler later tried to hijack the Games for political gain. His theories of racial superiority were confounded by the exploits of American Jesse Owens, who won four gold medals and forged a life-long friendship with his German rival in the Long Jump, 'Luz' Long. For the first time full results from every event were set down.

### HEADING DOWN SOUTH

Melbourne in 1956 was the first southern hemisphere city to stage the Olympic Games. Never before had an Olympic Games begun in November. They became known as 'The Friendly Games' despite a tense Cold War political backdrop as a result of the Suez crisis and the Hungarian uprising. The sporting competition launched the career of Australian swimmer Dawn Fraser, who dominated the women's 100m Freestyle over the next three Olympic Games.

### DOUBLING UP

Paris was the first city to host the Olympic Games twice. In 1900 they were run in conjunction with the Paris Exhibition and were, to a certain extent, overshadowed by the fun of the fair. They lasted five months, but were surrounded by confusion over what were official events. The Games returned in 1924 and are associated with the story of British athletes Eric Liddell and Harold Abrahams, later celebrated in the Oscar-winning film *Chariots of Fire*.



↑ Colonel Frank Wheldon receives the gold medal on behalf of the victorious British Eventing team at Stockholm in 1956.

### STOCKHOLM STAND-IN

Stockholm was thrust into the Olympic spotlight for the second time in 1956. Australian quarantine laws prevented the transit of horses to Melbourne, the designated Host City, so the equestrian events were held earlier in the year in the Swedish capital. They took place in the stadium that had been used for the 1912 Games. Gymnast Karin Lindberg was chosen to light the Olympic Flame, becoming the first woman to do so.

### HIROSHIMA REMEMBERED

The 1964 Games in Tokyo were the first held in Asia. Tokyo had been designated as Host City for 1940 before the war intervened.

The Olympic Flame was lit by Yoshinori Sakai, who was born in Hiroshima the day the atom bomb was dropped. These were the first Games to be televised by satellite. The traditional Japanese sport of Judo was included on the programme for the first time, but to the dismay of the host nation the blue riband open category was won by the giant Dutchman, Anton Geesink.

← Hiroshima survivor Yoshinori Sakai about to light the Olympic Flame in Tokyo in 1964.



## HARMONY BREAKTHROUGH

Seoul unexpectedly beat the Japanese city of Nagoya to win the 1988 nomination. At the time, Korea had only hosted one World Championship event (in shooting), but the Games proved a success. 149 nations marched in the Opening Ceremony, the last at a Summer Games to be held in daylight. The 'Games of Harmony' were the first in 12 years to be attended by both the Soviet Union and the United States. Soviet gymnast Vladimir Artemov won four gold medals, in Horizontal Bars, Parallel Bars, All-Around Individual and Team Combined exercises.

## ALTITUDE ADVANTAGE

In 1968, Mexico City became the first Central American city to stage the Games. Athletes from altitude prospered in the distance events. Kenyans Kip Keino (men's 1500m) and Naftali Temu (men's 10,000m) and Ethiopian Mamo Wolde in the men's Marathon all took gold. The Track events also produced a world record harvest: Jim Hines (men's 100m) Tommie Smith (men's 200m), Lee Evans (men's 400m) and, most famously, Bob Beamon in the men's Long Jump.

## BEATING THE BOYCOTT

In the build-up to the 1980 Games in Moscow, the International Olympic Committee struggled to prevent a western boycott. The United States chose to stay away as a protest against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, along with Canada, Japan and the Federal Republic of Germany. Great Britain did compete, but British chef de mission Dick Palmer marched alone in the Opening Ceremony carrying the Olympic Flag. Other nations also competed under the IOC flag or that of their National Olympic Committee.

## MORE THAN A GAMES

Barcelona finally won the right to stage the Olympic Games in 1992, some 60 years after the city first made a bid. These proved spectacular Games from the moment Paralympic archer Antonio Rebollo lit the Olympic Flame with a burning arrow. The home crowds were delighted by the men's 1500m success of Fermin Cacho on the track, and across town Spain won Football gold at the iconic Nou Camp Stadium, with a team including Barcelona's own Pep Guardiola.

## "RIO'S ELECTION LEFT AFRICA AS THE ONLY REGION YET TO WELCOME THE GAMES"

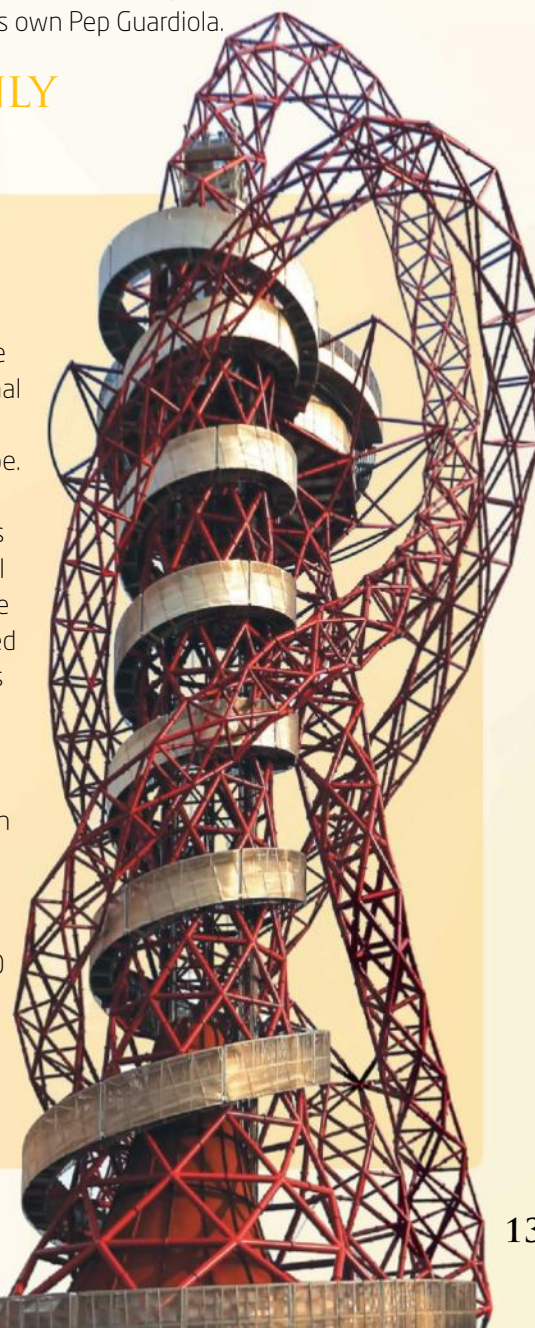
### RIO CARNIVAL

Rio de Janeiro will become the 23rd different city to host the Summer Olympic Games since the modern era began in Athens in 1896. Its election brought South America to the party at last, and left Africa as the only region yet to welcome the Games. Four cities have staged the sporting extravaganza more than once: London, the only three-time host (in 1908, 1948 and 2012), plus Athens (1896 and 2004), Paris (1900 and 1924) and Los Angeles (1932 and 1984). Tokyo will become the fourth repeat host in 2020, following its 1964 staging, while Stockholm hosted the 1912 Games and then equestrian events for the 1956 Games. Europe leads the continental tally with 16 stagings followed by North America with five (United States four, Canada one), Asia with three (China, Japan and South Korea), Australia with two and Central America with just one (Mexico).

### WINNING THE BID AND BEYOND

London was awarded the 2012 Olympic Games – formally the XXX Olympiad – at the 117th Session (congress) of the International Olympic Committee in Singapore on 6 July 2005. The bid committee was led by Seb Coe. It projected a vision of legacy for both the East End of London and British youth sports participation combined with an international outreach project. Four rounds of voting were needed in Singapore. Moscow was eliminated first then New York followed by Madrid. This left London and favourite Paris, but London won with 54 votes to 50. That ensured it would be the first city to host the modern Games on three occasions, having done so in 1908 and 1948. The London 2012 Games were a huge success in every way, with millions of fans cheering home athletes to levels of success not seen in more than 100 years and sustained brilliance from Olympic legends Michael Phelps and Usain Bolt.

➔ *The amazing Orbit in the Olympic Park attracted thousands of visitors during the London 2012 Games.*





## FAMOUS FIRSTS

Twenty-seven Olympic Games held in the modern era (since 1896) and the numerous editions of the Ancient Games – held in Greece, normally on a four-yearly basis, between 776bc and 393ad (when they were suppressed by Theodosius I in an attempt to impose Christianity on the region) – have produced numerous landmarks. Here is a selection of the most significant of them.



### HOW IT BEGAN

A heat of the men's 100m was the first event to be held at the first Olympic Games of the modern era in 1896. American Frank Lane was the first to cross the line. The first gold medal to be decided came in the men's Triple Jump. Harvard student James Connolly had made the trip to Athens against the advice of the dean at his university, but returned home with the first-ever gold medal awarded at the Games. He later ran for Congress, but without success.

← *American athlete James Connolly holds the distinction of winning the first-ever Olympic Games gold medal, which he won in the men's Triple Jump at Athens 1896.*

### ALL-ROUND WINNER

American Eddie Eagan was the first man to win Summer and Winter gold medals. In 1920 he boxed his way to Light Heavy Weight gold at the Summer Games in Antwerp. A law student, he attended both Harvard and Yale universities and later Oxford, but returned to the Olympic arena to make history as part of the US Four-man Bobsleigh team that won gold at the 1932 Winter Games at Lake Placid.

### OUT IN FRONT

The first recorded Olympic champion was a man called Coroebus. He lived close to Olympia in the province of Elis and won the Stadion race over a distance of approximately 180 metres in 776 BC. A baker by profession, he received an olive branch for his trouble and could be described as the first celebrity chef.



↑ *Belgian fencer Victor Boin (centre) becomes the first athlete in history to swear the Olympic Oath, introduced for the first time at the 1920 Games.*

### OATH OF RESPECT

The Olympic Oath was first taken at the Antwerp 1920 Games by the Belgian fencer Victor Boin. A journalist and member of the organising committee, Boin had previously represented his country in Water Polo and Swimming. He grasped the Belgian national flag as he swore the Oath, promising to respect the rules. Since 1984 the Olympic Flag has been used in the Opening Ceremony instead of a national flag, and an anti-doping clause has been added. An Oath for judges was introduced in 1972.

### WOMEN'S BREAKTHROUGH

Great Britain's Charlotte Cooper was the first woman to win an Olympic gold medal. She beat local favourite Hélène Prévost to win the women's Tennis Singles at the Paris 1900 Games. She added a second gold when she won the Mixed Doubles with Reggie Doherty. Cooper went on to win the women's singles title at Wimbledon five times.

### ALL IN THE SWIM

The long-distance Swimming events held in Beijing were not the first to be held in open water. In 1896 all events were in the bay of Piraeus and, in 1900, the River Seine was used. Swimming was not held in an indoor pool until the 1948 Games in London.

### ICE IN SUMMER

The first gold medals for Ice Skating were awarded at the London 1908 Olympic Games. Florence 'Madge' Syers won the women's competition and skated to a bronze in the Pairs with her husband Edgar. Sweden's Ulrich Salchow was the winner of the men's competition. Figure Skating was also held at the Antwerp 1920 Olympic Games, but from 1924 it was included in the Winter Olympic Games.





## COMANECI PERFECTION

Nadia Comaneci was only 14 when she flew off the Parallel Bars to execute a perfect landing on the first day of the Gymnastics competition in 1976 in Montreal. The judges awarded her a perfect ten. Her routine during the Team Competition established her as the star of the Games. She received a further ten on Balance Beam and achieved the same score five times more en route to three individual gold medals.

← *Nadia Comaneci's perfection earned not only top marks but also headlines around the world.*

## CULTURAL COMPETITION

Competitions for artists were introduced for the first time at the Stockholm 1912 Olympic Games, making it possible to win a gold medal for painting, sculpture, music, literature and even architectural design. Olympic founding father Baron Pierre de Coubertin won a prize for his 'Ode to Sport'. He submitted his entry under the pseudonyms George Hohrod and M. Eschbach. The artistic contests were discontinued following the London 1948 Games, but art and music are now included in the Cultural Olympiad, which runs in conjunction with the Games.

**"ARTISTIC CONTESTS WERE DISCONTINUED AFTER 1948"**

## BENOIT'S MARATHON

Joan Benoit of the United States became the first woman to win an Olympic gold medal for the Marathon. The event was not introduced until the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. Organisers had included an 800m race for women at the 1928 Games in Amsterdam, but this was considered unsuccessful. As a result, women did not compete at any distance over 200m until the 1964 Games in Tokyo.

→ *Joan Benoit won the first women's Marathon to be held at the Games, in Los Angeles in 1984, in a time of 2:24:52 - more than a minute ahead of her closest rival.*

## GENDER EQUALITY

London 2012 saw all nations represented, for the first time, by both male and female competitors. Steady pressure from the IOC had been rewarded by Brunei Darussalam and Qatar then, finally, Saudi Arabia agreeing to send women to the Games. Wojdan Shahrkhani became the first Saudi woman to compete at the Olympic Games when she took part in the over 78kg category in Judo; Sarah Attar, in the 800m heats, was the first Saudi woman to compete in the Athletics. The 80,000 crowd cheered Attar as she finished 43 seconds behind heat winner Janeth Jepkosgei Busienei of Kenya.

## TEENAGER'S VISION

A letter by a Chinese-Australian teenager called John Ian Wing prompted one of the enduring traditions of the Olympic Movement. He wrote to the organisers of the Melbourne 1956 Olympic Games with his idea for the Closing Ceremony: 'The march I have in mind is different from the Opening. War, politics and nationality will be forgotten if the world could be made as one nation. They must not march but walk freely and wave to the public.' Games organisers arranged the parade of athletes as he had suggested. Ever since, competitors have entered the arena at the Closing Ceremony without distinction of nationality, creed or colour. Wing did not attend any of the events in Melbourne and was identified only many years later. He was guest of honour at the Closing Ceremony at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.



# FAMOUS GOLD MEDAL HAULS

Thousands of athletes have achieved their dream of competing at the Olympic Games over the years, some of them have entered Games folklore by winning a gold medal and a select few have achieved legendary status by striking gold on at least three occasions. The following can be considered to be among the greatest Olympians of all time.

## CAPTAIN CANADA

Canadian showjumper Ian Millar began his Olympic career in Munich in 1972, but had to wait until his ninth Olympic Games before he won a medal. Still going strong in 2008, aged 61, he was a member of the Canadian silver-medal winning team in the Team Jumping event held in Hong Kong.



↑ Larissa Latynina won nine gold medals at three Olympic Games.

## LUCKY NINE FOR LARISSA

Over three Olympiads, from 1956 to 1964, Ukrainian-born Larissa Latynina dominated women's Gymnastics. A member of the all-conquering Soviet team, individually she won four golds in Melbourne in 1956, including the blue riband All-Around title, which she retained four years later. Her ninth and final gold came with the USSR team in 1964. She also won a further five bronze and four silver medals, and her 18 Olympic medals remain a record. In her entire Olympic career she finished outside the medals in only one event.

## FOUR FOR LEWIS

Carl Lewis emulated his countryman Jesse Owens by winning four gold medals at a single Games. At Los Angeles 1984, he took gold in the men's 100m, 200m, the 4 x 100m Relay and the Long Jump. Although his dominance in the sprints faded, his power in the Long Jump never waned and his victory at Atlanta 1996 gave him four consecutive titles, equalling the feat of discus thrower and fellow American Al Oerter.

## EWRY'S STANDING START

In the early Games, jump events from a standing start were included on the roster and Ray Ewry was the undisputed master of them, winning the Standing High Jump, Standing Long Jump and Standing Triple Jump at the 1900 and 1904 Games and the Standing High Jump and Long Jump in 1908. His eight gold medals are a record for a field-event athlete.



↑ Emile Zatopek won men's 5000m, 10,000m and Marathon gold at Helsinki 1952.

## THE UNIQUE ZATOPEK

Czechoslovak Emil Zatopek had already served notice of his ability as a long-distance runner by winning men's 10,000m gold in 1948 in London, but it was in Helsinki in 1952 that he carved his name in the history books. Zatopek retained his 10,000m title and completed the long-distance track double with victory over 5000m. Only three days later, he took part in his first Marathon and won it. In one single week he had raced four times over a total distance of some 62 kilometres. To this day, he remains the only athlete in history to win all three long-distance events at a single Olympic Games.

## FAMILY FORTUNES

Italian brothers Piero and Raimondo D'Inzeo were the first men to compete together at eight consecutive Games. In 1948, older brother Piero competed in Showjumping and Raimondo in Eventing. They competed as team-mates in 1956, with Raimondo winning silver and Piero bronze plus a team silver. Raimondo went on to win Individual Jumping gold in 1960. The brothers' final appearance came at the 1976 Games. Between them they won 12 Olympic medals.

## HISTORY MAN PHELPS

No man has enjoyed more success at the Olympic Games than Michael Phelps. He had already written his name in the annals of world swimming before he competed at Beijing in 2008. He surpassed compatriot Mark Spitz with eight golds at a single Olympiad, all but one set in world-record times and all in morning sessions. The magical eight was completed in the men's 4 x 100m Medley Relay. In Athens he had already stormed to victory in six events to bring his career tally to 14. He has also won two bronze medals.



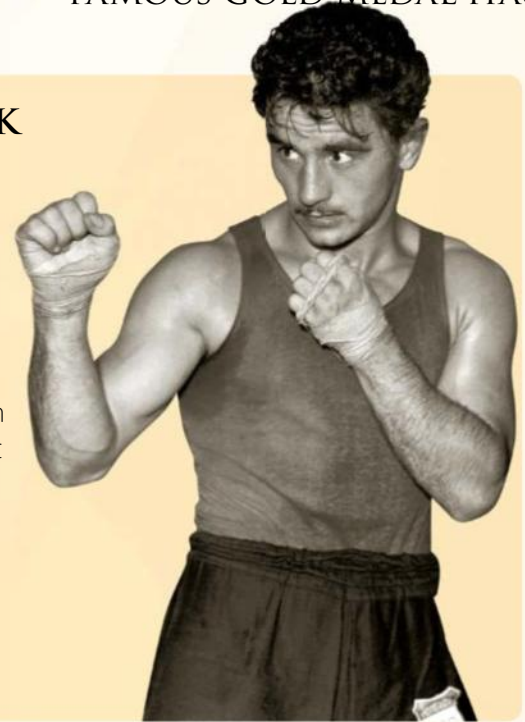
## REDGRAVE'S RECORD

Sir Steve Redgrave's five gold medals in Olympic Rowing have given him legendary status. In 1984, he was a member of the Coxed Four that won Great Britain's first Rowing gold in 36 years. In 1988, partnered by Andy Holmes, he won gold in the Coxless Pairs and then formed a powerful alliance with Matthew Pinsent, eight years his junior. Together they won gold in the Coxed Pairs in 1992 and 1996. Both men were chosen for the Coxless Four in Sydney where, amid feverish speculation, Redgrave, aged 38, played his part to win a fifth consecutive gold, a staggering feat in an endurance event. Redgrave was later knighted, as was Pinsent after he won his fourth gold medal, again in the Coxless Four, at Sydney 2000.

## PAPP'S HAT-TRICK IN THE RING

Hungarian Lazlo Papp was the first boxer to win three consecutive gold medals at the Olympic Games. He beat home favourite John Wright to win the Middle Weight title at the London 1948 Games, then claimed further gold medals at Light Middle Weight in 1952 and 1956. Afterwards he was allowed to turn professional, a rarity in the communist era.

➔ *Lazlo Papp was Hungary's hat-trick hero.*



## HOY'S RECORD HAUL

Sir Chris Hoy's victories in Cycling's Team Sprint and Keirin at London 2012 took his total of Olympic gold medals to a Great Britain record of six, one more than rower Sir Steve Redgrave. Hoy also extended his overall medals total to a British joint-record seven. Fellow cyclist Bradley Wiggins also has seven medals, but with four gold, one silver and two bronze. Great Britain's total of 65 medals in all with 29 golds made London 2012 the team's most successful Games since the first time London had hosted them, in 1908, when, in a very different era, Great Britain won 139 medals, 55 of them gold.

**"IN 2014 PHELPS CAME OUT OF RETIREMENT WITH A VIEW TO COMPETING AT THE 2016 GAMES"**

## THE PHELPS LEGEND GROWS

United States swimmer Michael Phelps retired after the London 2012 Olympic Games as the most decorated Olympian ever, with a total of 22 medals. He won six gold and two bronze at Athens 2004, a record eight golds at Beijing 2008 and four golds and two silvers at London 2012. Former Soviet gymnast Larisa Latynina, who held the record for nearly 50 years, was at London 2012 to cheer him on. She won 18 medals (nine gold), at Melbourne 1956, Rome 1960 and Tokyo 1964. Phelps's total is double that of any other male swimmer (fellow Americans Mark Spitz (nine gold), Matt Biondi (eight gold) and London 2012 Swimming rival Ryan Lochte (five gold) all have 11 medals. In 2014 Phelps came out of retirement with a view to attempting to qualify for the 2016 Games. Further successes in the pool would cement his place as the most decorated Olympian ever.

➔ *Michael Phelps's total of 22 Olympic Games medals may never be beaten.*



# OLYMPIC TORCH RELAYS

The modern Olympic Games maintain a link with the Games of ancient Greece through the ceremonial Olympic Torch Relay, carrying the sacred flame from Olympia, the original site of the Games, to the Host City. There, the lighting of the Olympic Cauldron, usually positioned high above the Athletics Stadium, signifies the precise moment when the Games truly begin.

## LONDON'S NEW RELAY

The 2012 Olympic Torch Relay started on 19 May and lasted more than two months before the Flame was brought up the Thames to the Olympic Stadium right on cue for the lighting of the Cauldron at the climax of the Opening Ceremony. Around 3,000 runners each carried the Torch 300 metres in the relay. The 2012 Torch Relay toured the United Kingdom, visiting national heritage sites, venues with sporting significance, cultural festivals and many schools. The concept of an international relay was abandoned after problems during the 2008 run.

➔ *David Beckham (left) lights the Olympic Torch at RNAS Culdrose, Cornwall.*







# OPENING CEREMONIES

The various ceremonial aspects of the Olympic Games help to set them apart from other international sports events. The extravagance and splendour of the Opening Ceremony is often one of the highlights of the Games, and helps to heighten the anticipation of the coming days of sporting action.

## GROWTH OF THE GAMES

When the first modern Olympic Games were staged in Athens in 1896, the Opening Ceremony featured competitors from 22 national Olympic committees. At London 2012, all 204 IOC member nations sent competitors to the Games for the first time ever.

**“IN 2012, EVERY IOC MEMBER NATION SENT COMPETITORS FOR THE FIRST TIME”**



↑ Queen Elizabeth II opens the 1976 Olympic Games.

## SPEECH-MAKING

IOC rules not only expect there to be certain ceremonial speeches made at the Opening Ceremony; they even provide the precise wording that officials are supposed to use. This meant that on the evening of 27 July 2012, in her Golden Jubilee year, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II uttered the words: ‘I declare open the Games of London celebrating the 30th Olympiad of the modern era.’ It was not the first time that the Queen has made the speech at an Opening Ceremony. At Montreal, in 1976, Her Majesty declared the Games open and, mindful that she was in the French-speaking province of Quebec, the first language she used was French.

## PARADE OF NATIONS

The Olympic Charter demands that ‘each delegation dressed in its official uniform must be preceded by a name-board bearing its name and must be accompanied by its flag’. The Charter’s rules also determine the marching order for all Opening Ceremonies, with Greece, as the first home of the Games, given the honour of leading the parade. To bring a show to a suitable climax, the Charter stipulates that the country hosting the Games should always be the last to enter the Stadium.

↓ *As is the custom, Greece – considered the mother nation of the Olympic Games – was handed the honour of leading the Parade of Nations at the Opening Ceremony at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.*



## THE RIGHT FLAG

Olympic rules were re-written ahead of the Moscow 1980 Olympic Games to allow teams to march behind ‘a’ flag, rather than their national flag. The United States had called for a boycott of Moscow following the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan – but the British Olympic Association defied its government’s orders and let its athletes follow their own conscience about whether they should compete. As a result, the British team in Moscow marched behind the Olympic Flag, and the likes of Duncan Goodhew, Steve Ovett and Allan Wells never heard ‘God Save the Queen’ when they received their gold medals. Indeed, Seb Coe had to come back and win the men’s 1500m for a second time in 1984 to have that experience.

## FLAG GAMES

The Olympic Flag was used at the Opening Ceremony in 1992 by the ‘Unified Team’ – comprising competitors from the states of the former Soviet Union – and by Timor-Leste in 2000. On other occasions, a special flag has been used by delegations, such as when the two Koreas marched together in Sydney in 2000 and again in Athens in 2004.



## BIG-BUDGET PRODUCTIONS

When Baron Pierre de Coubertin revived the Olympic Games at the end of the 19th century, he believed that such ceremonies would be an essential element for creating the correct atmosphere at the Games, with a strong acknowledgement towards the Games' roots in ancient Greece. However, writing nearly 30 years ago, Lord Killanin, another former president of the International Olympic Committee, expressed his concern at the tendency for Opening Ceremonies to feature ever more extravagant, big-budget productions: 'An unfortunate tradition has arisen for using the Opening Ceremony as a means of displaying national pride,' the Irishman wrote, 'with teams vying with each other for the most outstanding uniforms, especially now that women athletes are so prominent.' Killanin was writing after the Moscow 1980 Games, but clearly could not have foreseen the Hollywood-style production used at the Opening Ceremony at Los Angeles 1984, that included a man entering the Coliseum using a James Bond jet-pack ... to say nothing of the 1,000 perfectly synchronised drummers at Beijing 2008.

↓ *The London 2012 Games Opening Ceremony was a roaring success.*



↑ *Australian athlete Cathy Freeman finds herself centre stage as she lights the Olympic Flame at the climax of the Opening Ceremony at Sydney 2000.*

## FLAMING CLIMAX

The ceremonial all leads to the biggest set-piece of the Opening Ceremony, the lighting of the Olympic Flame, which burns brightly over the stadium, and the Host City, signifying a two-week truce. The lighting of the Flame has seen some spectacular moments at recent Games: Muhammad Ali, winner of a Boxing gold medal in 1960, performed the task at Atlanta 1996; Cathy Freeman, seemingly standing in a shower of fire, was handed the honour of lighting the Flame at Sydney 2000; and, most spectacular of all, Spanish archer Antonio Rebollo sent his flaming arrow arcing into the Barcelona night sky in 1992.





## CLOSING CEREMONIES

Steeped in protocol, the Closing Ceremony has become an integral, memorable and spectacular part of the Olympic Games. It climaxes with extinguishing the Olympic Flame, singing the Olympic Hymn and, finally, to the sound of a farewell song, the symbolic lowering of the Olympic Flag before it is carried out of the arena.

### EIGHT FOR LUCK

At the Closing Ceremony of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, London's Boris Johnson, in common with the receiving mayors of previous Host Cities all the way back to the Antwerp Games in 1920, waved the newly received Olympic Flag from side to side eight times, as required by tradition. Once the Olympic Flag was symbolically placed in London's hands, a short performance was staged within the vast Bird's Nest Stadium to offer the 100,000 spectators, and the world watching on TV, a taste of what London would have to offer when it hosted the Games four years later. The spectacular show featured a bold red double-decker bus as the stage for a spectacular display by scores of dancers, many carrying umbrellas, plus Jimmy Page, from the rock group Led Zeppelin, playing guitar to accompany singer Leona Lewis, together with various sound clips from BBC radio and the folk tune 'Greensleeves', all rounded off by David Beckham kicking a football into the jubilant crowd.

### CLOSING RULES

Many of the elements of the Closing Ceremonies are governed more by tradition than by International Olympic Committee rules. Usually Flagbearers from each participating country enter the stadium in single file, and behind them march all of the athletes who have competed in the Games, not in strict team order – as the protocol of the Opening Ceremony demands – but mixed together informally. Certain key sports always used to be staged on the final day of the Games: the Individual Showjumping Grand Prix was often the centrepiece of the final day's action, the event sometimes being staged in the main stadium. The final Athletics event to be run, with exhausted runners drifting into the stadium before the Closing Ceremony began, was the men's Marathon, though this was not the case at London 2012, as the race did not finish in the Olympic Stadium. Perhaps because of the Marathon's close connections with the Olympic Games' Greek roots, the medal ceremony for the race is usually integrated into the Closing Ceremony.

## FLAG DAYS

Flags play a massively significant part in the formalities of the Closing Ceremonies. One key part is the symbolic transfer of the Olympic Flag from the host city to the next hosts. For nearly 70 years, the flag used was the 'Antwerp Flag', so called because it had been presented to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) by the Belgian hosts at the 1920 Summer Games, at which this part of the ceremony was introduced. This flag was used until the 1988 Games in Seoul, when the Korean organisers gave the IOC a near-identical replacement, known at the 'Seoul Flag'. The Winter Olympic Games have a similar ceremony at the end of the Games, where the 'Oslo Flag', presented to the IOC at the 1952 Winter Games, is used.

↓ *The essential flags at the 2008 Games Closing Ceremony: Greece, the Olympic Flag, China (the host nation) and Great Britain (the next hosts).*



### CEREMONIAL AND OATHS

Once all the athletes have entered the stadium, three national flags are hoisted on flagpoles, while the corresponding national anthems are played: the flag of Greece on the middle pole to honour the birthplace of the Olympic Games, the flag of the host country on the left-hand pole, and the flag of the country hosting the next Games on the right-hand pole. In 2012, this third flag was that of Brazil, as Rio de Janeiro will host the 2016 Olympic Games.

### MEDAL SURGE

At the early stagings of the modern Games at the beginning of the 20th century, all the medal presentations were staged at the Closing Ceremony. However, if this had been done in London in 2012, with gold, silver and bronze medals handed out in more than 300 events across 26 sports, five-minute medal presentation ceremonies alone would have lasted for more than 25 hours.





👉 A pyrotechnic lighting display within the Olympic Stadium came during the London 2012 Closing Ceremony, followed by a stunning fireworks show at its end.

## PARTYING OFF TO RIO

The Closing Ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games was described as the 'best after-show party there has ever been' by director Kim Gavin. The culmination of 16 days of competition was titled 'A Symphony of British Music' and began with British actor Timothy Spall appearing as Winston Churchill atop Big Ben in the Olympic Stadium set. After welcoming HRH Prince Harry and IOC President Jacques Rogge, the next hour was an unbroken segue of popular British music featuring appearances from acts such as Ray Davies, The Pet Shop Boys, Madness and Annie Lennox among others. David Bowie's 'Fashion' played, while supermodels such as Lily Cole, Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell appeared in the centre of the Olympic Stadium to celebrate the British fashion industry. George Michael performed his 1990 hit 'Freedom' as the 'audience pixels' around the Stadium dazzled with complex patterns and images. The pixel screens were

made up of 70,799 small panels mounted between the seats controlled by a single computer. The lights flashed on and around the athletes who were celebrating in the middle of the Stadium. LOCOG Chair Seb Coe gave a closing speech, before Jacques Rogge officially announced the end of the London 2012 Games – his final one as IOC President. The Olympic Flame was then extinguished following a ballet performance by Darcey Bussell. The Olympic Flag was passed by the Mayor of London, through the hands of the IOC President, to the Mayor of Rio de Janeiro. Following the official handover, the organisers from the 2016 Olympic Games Host City Rio de Janeiro delivered an eight-minute show with a taste of what the world might expect in 2016: in typical Brazilian fashion it featured two national staples; a carnival atmosphere and Pele. The evening finished with rock legends The Who playing out the ceremony with their anthem – and, in a way, an unofficial motto for London 2012: 'My Generation'.

## APPOINTMENTS AND ACCOLADES AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY

The Closing Ceremony is now used by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to conclude some of the business it has conducted outside the sporting arenas. During the Games, all competitors are invited to elect new members of the IOC Athletes' Commission, the body that represents the competitors' views, and which comprises active or recently retired Olympians. On behalf of the athletes, one of these new members then presents a bouquet of flowers to a Games volunteer as a mark of tribute and gratitude for their work during the event.

## HANDOVER CEREMONY

The formality of handing over 'possession' of the Games from one Host City to the next was incorporated into the Closing Ceremony at the Montreal 1976 Games. A formal protocol governs the procedure, with the mayor of the Host City joining the President of the IOC on the rostrum and returning to him the Olympic Flag. The IOC President then places it in the hands, and the trust, of the mayor of the next Host City.



# GAMES MASCOTS

They may now be an integral part of the promotion and build-up to an Olympic Games and an ever-present feature during the event itself, but Games mascots are a relatively new phenomenon, with the first – a German dachshund called Waldi – appearing as recently as 1972 in Munich. Here is a collection of the most memorable, and a few of the more unfortunate, mascots to have appeared over the years.



↑ Sydney went for a three-in-one mascot concept in 2000 with (from left to right) Ollie, Millie and Syd.

## MULTIPLE MASCOTS

The trend for multiple mascots, representing different aspects of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, was started in 2000, with Sydney's cartoon characters Syd, Millie and Olly – based on native Australian animals.

## MEMORABLE MISHA

The Games have also produced some memorable 'characters': Misha, the bear adopted by the 1980 Moscow Games, showed the Russians to be engaged with the modernisation of the Games, and four years later Sam, the Los Angeles eagle, was very Disney-like in its styling and demeanour. A statue of Misha still stands inside the entrance to the Luzhniki sports complex in Moscow, which is dominated by the Olympic Stadium.

## MISSING THE POINT

The least successful Olympic mascots of all time are generally considered to be Izzy, the cartoon character produced for the 1996 Centenary Games in Atlanta – the first Games mascot to be designed by computer – and the beaver Amik from Montreal 1976, who was also unsuccessful in engaging public sympathies.

➔ Atlanta's luckless Izzy tried his best in 1996 ... but will be remembered as one of the least successful Games mascots.

➔ Waldi the dachshund left his mark at the 1972 Games.



## FIRST MASCOT

The Summer Olympic Games' first mascot – at Munich 1972 – was a cuddly, multi-coloured German dachshund named Waldi. His image appeared on posters, stickers, key-rings and mugs – all in the colours of the Olympic Rings. Four years earlier, the 1968 Winter Games in Grenoble had presented a stylised skiing figure, known as Schuss. Although this was sometimes described as the first Games mascot, it was not produced by the French organisers and was therefore not officially recognised.







↑ *Wenlock and Mandeville became two of the best-known faces not only in London but also around the world in 2012.*

## WENLOCK AND MANDEVILLE

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic mascots reflected the multimedia age of the 21st century. Wenlock and Mandeville were everywhere. They featured in a series of animated films and were a presence on social media, both on Twitter and Facebook. The names had Olympic heritage all of their own. Their inspiration was the Shropshire town of Much Wenlock, considered by many as the true birthplace of the modern Olympic Games, and Stoke Mandeville, home of the world-renowned spinal injuries unit where the Paralympic Movement began back in 1948 – with the staging of the Stoke Mandeville Games.

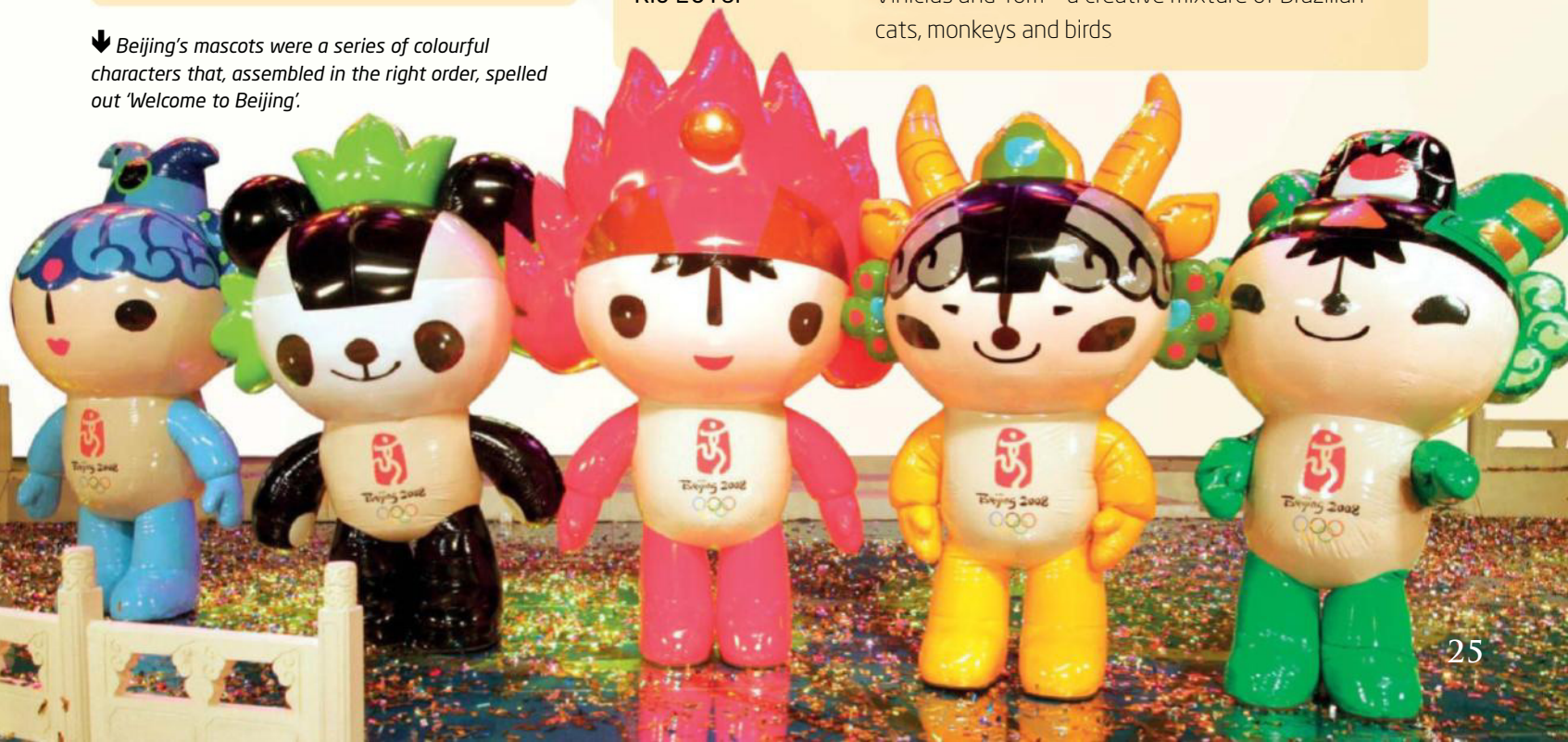
↓ *Beijing's mascots were a series of colourful characters that, assembled in the right order, spelled out 'Welcome to Beijing'.*

## VINCIUS AND TOM IN TUNE

Viniçius, the Rio 2016 mascot, is a creative creature made from a mixture of Brazilian cats, monkeys and birds. Introduced to the Olympic world in November 2014, the name was chosen by public ballot along with that of Tom for the mascot to the Paralympic Games. More than 300,000 votes were registered. The designs have been described as 'reflecting the diversity of Brazil's culture and people', while the names honoured Brazilian musicians and partners Viniçius de Moraes and Tom Jobim, who were Bossa Nova exponents and created the song 'The Girl from Ipanema'.

## WHO'S WHO?

Munich 1972:	Waldi – a dachshund
Montreal 1976:	Amik – a beaver, its name coming from the American Indian Algonquian language
Moscow 1980:	Misha – a bear created by children's books illustrator Victor Chizikov
Los Angeles 1984:	Sam the Eagle – designed by Walt Disney
Seoul 1988:	Hodori – a friendly little tiger
Barcelona 1992:	Cobi – a dog
Atlanta 1996:	Izzy – a computer-generated fantasy figure
Sydney 2000:	Syd, Olly and Millie – based on a kookaburra, a platypus and an echidna, all native to Australia
Athens 2004:	Athena and Phevos – based on ancient dolls found at archeological sites in Greece. Athena was the goddess of wisdom and patron of the city of Athens, while Phevos was the god of light and music
Beijing 2008:	Beibei (blue fish), Jingjing (black panda), Huanhuan (red flame), Yingying (yellow antelope) and Nini (green swallow) – these five names together translated as 'Welcome to Beijing'
London 2012:	Wenlock and Mandeville – riveting robots
Rio 2016:	Viniçius and Tom – a creative mixture of Brazilian cats, monkeys and birds





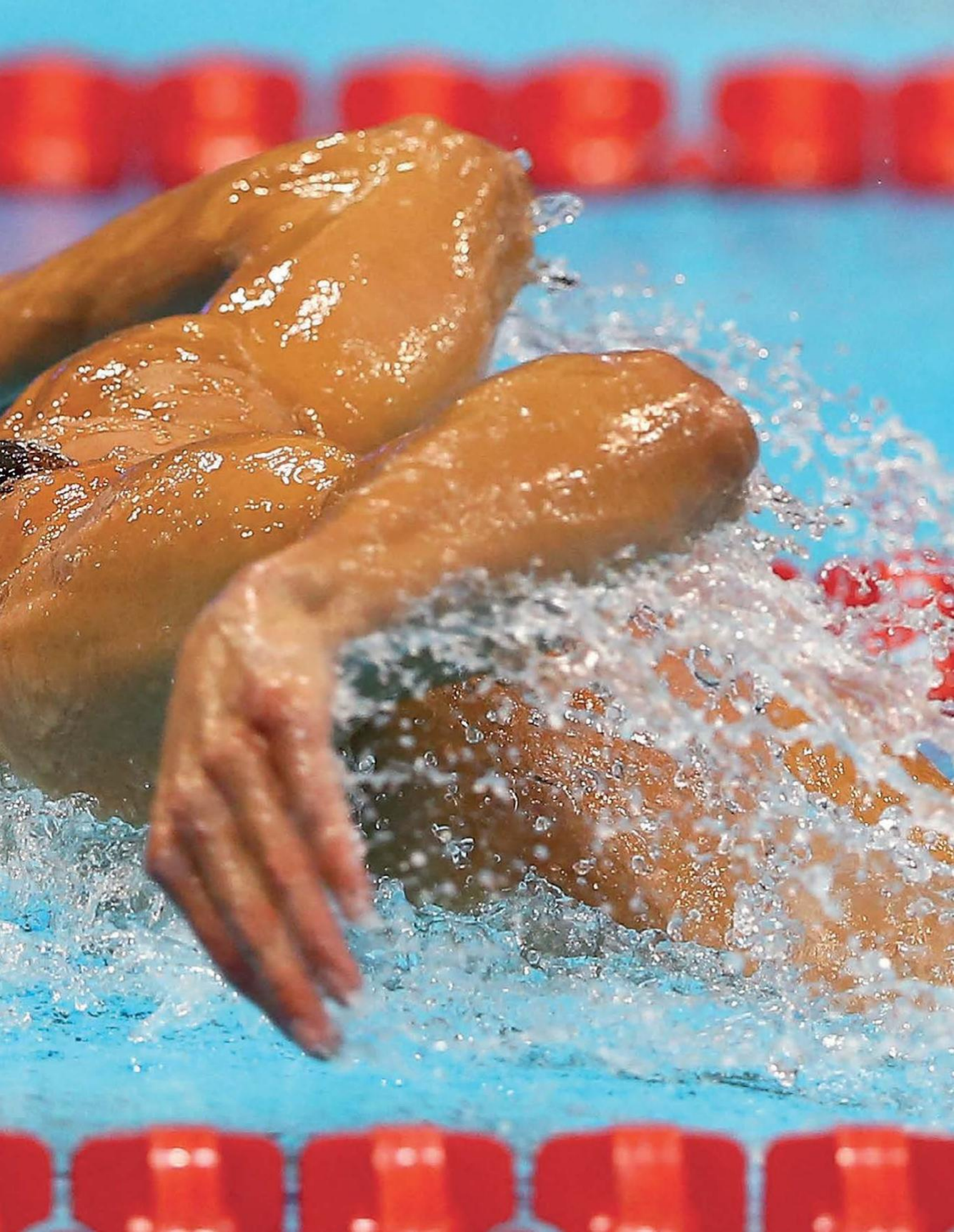
# AQUATICS

The Olympic pool has played host to some of the greatest athletes ever, in events ranging from swimming and diving to water polo

🏊 Michael Phelps set many Olympic Games records in his career, but 22 medals, 18 of them gold, may be the most remarkable of all.









## MEN'S DIVING

The first men's Diving event took place at the 1904 Olympic Games in St Louis, in which athletes contested two events - Platform Diving and a plunge-for-distance event (in which competitors aimed to reach the furthest distance from a standing dive). Today, men compete in 10m Platform and 3m Springboard competitions - both in individual and, since 2000, synchronised events.



### PINKSTON SETS A TREND

Clarence 'Bud' Pinkston's gold medal in 10m Platform in 1920 began an incredible run of seven successive victories for the United States that came to an end in 1956, when Mexican Joaquin Capilla Perez took gold. Americans would win again in 1960 and 1964, which meant that they had won nine of the ten gold medals in a span of 44 years - an astounding period of dominance.

### BACK TO SQUARE ONE...

The first diving championship was organised in Scotland in 1889, featuring a dive from the side and another from a height of 1.8 metres. The first national championship was held in 1895 at Highgate Ponds, in north London, where the country's first permanent diving stage (4.6m high) had been erected in 1893. Another 10m board was built, but was taken down after each staging of the competition, which ended in 1920.

## MITCHAM MAKES HISTORY

Matthew Mitcham, an Australian competing at his first Olympic Games at Beijing 2008, scored an astonishing 112.10 points in the 10m Platform, the highest ever total for a single dive in Olympic history, with his sixth and final dive, a 2½ somersault with 2½ twists in pike position invented by the British diver Leon Taylor. It earned him four perfect tens from the judges and took him into the gold-medal position for the first time in the competition.

**"MITCHAM'S 112.10 POINTS IS THE HIGHEST EVER TOTAL"**

## THE FIRST PERFECT TEN

The first perfect score of ten was awarded to the only man ever to win the 10m Platform at three straight Olympic Games, the Italian Klaus Dibiasi, and it was awarded for the last dive of a career spanning four Olympic Games. It won him the gold in 1976 by a margin of 23 points and made him the first man ever to score a total of more than 600 points in a 10m Platform competition at the Olympic Games.

◀ *Klaus Dibiasi from Italy set a high standard over four Olympic Games Diving events between Tokyo 1964 and Montreal 1976.*

## CHINESE FIREWORKS

China's Jia Hu entered the 10m Platform final at Sydney 2000 in the lead and retained it with a brilliantly executed back 3½ somersault that was awarded a maximum ten by all but one judge. However, with an extremely difficult back 3½ somersault pike, his compatriot Liang Tian scored 101.52 points, then the highest scoring dive in the Games' history. Both men finished with more than 700 points, a record, Tian winning by 11 points with his total of 724.53.

## FADING METEOR

Shuwei Sun, from Guangdong province in China, had a meteoric rise. He won the 10m platform at the Asian Games aged 14 in 1990, became world champion in 1991, and in 1992 set a world record for the most points earned on a single dive when he was awarded perfect tens on a reverse 3½ somersault tuck for a total of 102 points. The same year, aged 16, he took gold at Barcelona with some ease. That was Sun's peak - he was never to compete at another Games. He missed selection in 1996 and was injured in 2000.



◀ *Sweden's Erik Adlerz, a Platform Diving silver medalist at the 1920 Games, models the discreet swimwear of the era.*

## KEEPING THE MEN MODEST

It was not only the women divers who had to cover up when competing at the early Olympics. In 1920, the rules decreed men had to wear 'cloth drawers' at least 6 centimetres wide at the hip. The whole trunk and the legs down to the thighs had to be covered, with a hole only 7.5cm from the armpit for the arms.





## COURAGE WORTH GOLD FOR LOUGANIS

Greg Louganis became the first man to win 3m Springboard and 10m Platform gold medals at two Olympic Games in Seoul in 1988. His victory was not without drama and extreme courage on his part. In a preliminary dive in the Springboard, a reverse 2½ somersault in the pike position, he hit his head on the board and landed clumsily. He was slightly concussed and needed four temporary sutures in the wound, but 35 minutes later he dived again.

◀ *The moment when Greg Louganis hit the springboard at the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul.*

## DALEY'S DELIGHT

Great Britain's Tom Daley was one of the home poster boys of the London 2012 Games and he greeted his bronze medal in the men's 10m Platform with as much glee as if he had won the gold. The 18-year-old who, when he was still just 13 years old, had qualified to compete at the Beijing 2008 Games, as Britain's youngest ever male competitor, made a tentative start to the competition and only scraped into the semi-final in 15th place. But Daley conquered his nerves, and even obtained the right to a re-dive after complaining he had been distracted by a rash of camera-flash bulbs from the 17,500 crowd inside the Aquatics Centre. He even led at the start of the sixth and last round of dives. Afterwards the 18-year-old said his only regret was that his biggest fan, his father Rob, who had died from cancer the previous year, could not have been there. Daley added: 'This has been the toughest year of my life. It was a shame he wasn't here to see this. The medal means so much to me. I just can't believe it.' It had almost been double success for Daley, as he narrowly missed out on winning a medal in the men's Synchronised 10m Platform competition. He and partner Pete Waterfield had finished fourth, one poor dive costing them the chance of a place on the podium.



↑ *Great Britain's Tom Daley reacts after winning bronze in the men's 10m Platform competition at the London 2012 Olympic Games.*

## LEE THE MASTER

American Sammy Lee was among the greatest ever authorities on diving technique. The first man to defend the 3m Springboard title at the Games, winning in 1948 and 1952, Lee then went on to coach the two other American men to gain double distinction, Robert Webster (10m Platform, 1960 and 1964) and Greg Louganis (3m Springboard and 10m Platform, 1984 and 1988).

## BOUDIA BEATS HIS DEMONS

American David Boudia, the man who needed support because he was scared of heights, overcame his demons to win gold in the men's 10m Platform, Diving's blue riband event, after a gripping final at London 2012 that went to the last dive. The American's score of 568.65 was just enough to beat China's Bo Qiu, who looked distraught to get silver with 566.85. Boudia's gold signalled a welcome renaissance for the United States, who had not won an Olympic Diving medal since Laura Wilkinson won the women's 10m Platform at Sydney 2000. Qiu, the Chinese teenager who came into the event as favourite and world champion, appeared devastated to have failed to live up to expectations. Australia's defending champion Matt Mitcham was eliminated in the semi-finals.

**"BOUDIA'S GOLD AT LONDON 2012 SIGNALLED A WELCOME RENAISSANCE FOR THE UNITED STATES DIVING TEAM"**

## WOMEN'S DIVING

Women's Diving has been part of the Olympic programme since 1920. Like the men, they compete in 10m Platform and 3m Springboard events, both as individuals and in synchronised events. Though the United States has an excellent record, recent Diving competitions have been dominated by China.



### LIKE MOTHER LIKE DAUGHTER

Patricia McCormick was the first diver, man or woman, to win 3m Springboard and 10m Platform gold medals at two Olympic Games, in 1952 and 1956. Eighteen years later, at the Olympic Games in her home city of Los Angeles, her daughter Kelly missed out on gold in the 3m Springboard by just 3.24 points. Four years later, she won another medal for the McCormick family, a 3m Springboard bronze.

🏊 *Double gold-medal winner Pat McCormick in action at Helsinki 1952.*

### TOO YOUNG TO DIVE?

Mingxia Fu was only 11 when she won the 1990 Goodwill Games and was just 12½ when she won the world title in 10m Platform in 1991. Shocked and worried about the precedent that Fu's age could set, FINA, the world body for diving, decreed a minimum age for Olympic competition of 14 years in the Olympic year. Although Fu only narrowly qualified for the 1992 Games, having turned 14 just 20 days before her 10m Platform Final, she won the gold medal by the most decisive margin in 60 years – and won again in 1996.

### DOUBLING UP

Synchronised Diving for pairs was introduced at Sydney 2000, effectively doubling the number of events. Nine judges, instead of seven, officiate, five looking for synchronisation and four for execution, two for each diver. The highest and lowest scores for both phases are discarded, the remainder added and then multiplied by the degree of difficulty. There are no preliminaries or semi-finals. Only eight pairs can qualify for the Olympic Games from major events in the previous year.

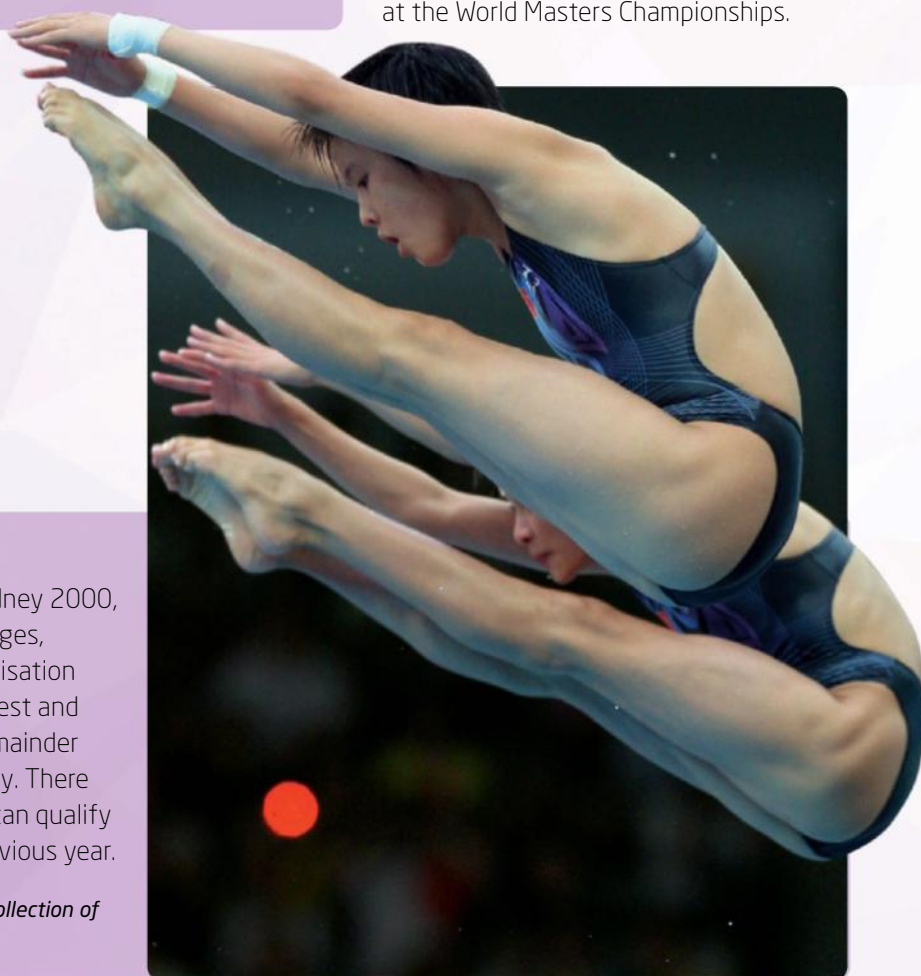
🏊 *China's Ruolin Chen (front) and Xin Wang (back) put in a collection of gold medal-winning dives at the 2008 Games in Beijing.*

## AMERICAN HAND-OVER

The United States dominated women's Diving from 1920 to 1956, but since China's return to the Olympic Games at Los Angeles 1984 their women have reigned supreme in the events. Jihong Zhou's gold medal in 10m Platform was China's only gold in that comeback Games, but Chinese women have since won the last six 3m Springboard titles, the only three synchronised golds contested and five of the last seven 10m Platform events. Chinese women also managed to win all four gold medals contested when the country hosted the 2008 Games in Beijing.

## YOUNG AND OLD

Aileen Ruggin, of Newport, Rhode Island, USA, won the first 3m Springboard gold medal, at Antwerp 1920. She was 14 years old and just 1.40 metres tall, the smallest competitor in the entire Games that year. She was diving into an outdoor moat of cold water and there were no hot showers for competitors, as there are today. It obviously did her no harm, because 82 years after her victory (aged 96) she won six age group titles at the World Masters Championships.





## KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

Elizabeth Becker and Clarence 'Bud' Pinkston are the most successful Diving couple in Olympic history. He won gold in the 10m Platform and silver in the 3m Springboard in 1920 and a bronze in 1924. At the latter Games, in Paris, he met Elizabeth Becker, another member of the US Diving team, who won gold in the 3m Springboard and silver in the 10m Platform. They married, had twins, and on their second birthday in 1928 she was back in Europe to win 10m Platform gold and 3m Springboard bronze in Amsterdam, making a family grand total of seven medals (two gold, two silver and three bronze).

## NO HEAD FOR HEIGHTS

Mary Ellen Clark won bronze at Barcelona 1992, diving from the 10-metre board, an exercise which means a body hits the water at 30mph. A year before the 1996 Games, however, she began to feel dizzy every time she dived, even from the 1m board. She was diagnosed with benign paroxysmal position vertigo and for nine months could not dive. After treatment including head swinging, neck collars and acupuncture, she returned to win bronze in 1996, aged 33, to become Diving's oldest medallist.

## LUCKY BREAK

Three-and-a-half months before the United States Olympic trials in 2000, Laura Wilkinson broke three bones in her right foot during training. The foot was in a cast for ten weeks, but a month after its removal she miraculously won selection for the US team. Incredibly, in Sydney six months after the accident, Wilkinson won the gold medal in 10m Platform after entering the final round back in fifth place and going on to beat Chinese diver Na Li by the slenderest of margins – a tiny 1.74 points.

## IN THE BEGINNING...

Modern divers enter a depth of around 5 metres of water so perfectly filtrated that they can see the bottom, but swimming pools in the 19th century were too shallow to allow diving. Most diving was therefore done outdoors into deeper pools, often muddy and always cold. The first Diving competition for women at the Games, in 1920, was into a dark moat. 'I had a mental block,' said the winner, Aileen Riggan. 'It was about sticking in the mud at the bottom. I kept thinking, "The water is black and nobody would find me if I really got stuck down there."'



↑ Minxia Wu enjoyed another 3m Springboard double at London 2012, winning both the women's Individual and Synchronised events.

## CHEN'S GOLDEN DOUBLE

China's Ruolin Chen was one of the handful of Olympic champions from Beijing 2008 who successfully defended their title at London 2012 when she took gold in the women's 10m Platform. Her score of 422.3 points proved superior only after a high-tension fifth and final round of competition. A string of fine performances meant that the five divers from second to sixth were separated by only 10.3 points. Australia's Brittany Broben took silver on 366.5 and Malaysia's Pandelesa Rinong Pamg bronze on 359.2. A major upset was the failure of Yadan Hu, world silver medallist, to press Chen for gold. Hu finished down in ninth place after event nerves appeared to have upset her first two dives. China's Minxia Wu won an unprecedented third consecutive Olympic women's Synchronised 3m Springboard title with partner Zi He.

## "DIVERS FROM SECOND TO SIXTH WERE SEPARATED BY JUST 10.3 POINTS"

## THE DIVING BABY

Californian Marjorie Gestring is the youngest person ever to win an individual gold medal in any sport. Too young to compete under modern rules, she was only 13 years 268 days old when she won the 3m Springboard in 1936. Younger still was another American, Dorothy Poynton, who won silver in the 3m Springboard aged just 13 years 23 days in 1928. She later won gold in the 10m Platform in 1932 and 1936.

← Marjorie Gestring was only 13 years old when she won gold at Berlin 1936.



# MEN'S SWIMMING

Swimming was one of the ten sports contested at the inaugural Olympic Games at Athens 1896, with athletes competing in four events: the 50m Freestyle, 100m Freestyle, 500m Freestyle and, surprisingly, the 100m Freestyle for sailors. By 2012 the number of events for men had grown to 17.

## THE DEAD HEAT

Australian John Devitt was so certain he had lost the 100m Freestyle final in 1960 that he congratulated 'winner' Lance Larson and left the pool. But then confusion reigned. The two men's times were identical at 55.2 seconds – an Olympic record. Two first-place judges thought Devitt had won, but two second-place judges thought Devitt was second, so of six judges three voted for Devitt, three for Larson. A head judge with a casting voted in favour of Devitt.

## ULTIMATE VICTOR

Michael Phelps could have matched Mark Spitz's single Games record of seven gold medals at the Athens 2004 Games. But he gave up his place on the United States 4 x 100m Medley Relay team to Ian Crocker after beating him in the 100m Butterfly by just 0.04sec, so settled for six golds. At Beijing 2008, Phelps broke Spitz's mark with eight gold medals, and his four golds at London 2012 gave him an Olympic Games record of 18.



## HOLLYWOOD DAYS

The Olympic swimming pool seemed to lead directly to Hollywood stardom between the two World Wars. First to take his swimming fame to the silver screen was Duke Kahanamoku, who made several silent movies, but more famous was Johnny Weissmuller, a winner of five gold medals in the 1920s, who became the most popular of all Tarzans. Eleanor Holm, the 1932 Backstroke champion, later became Jane to another Tarzan, Olympic Decathlon champion Glenn Moore, while Buster Crabbe, the 1932 400m Freestyle champion, became Flash Gordon on screen.

## NOT LIKE FATHER...

Swimming's first champion was Alfred Hajos, a Hungarian who had become a good swimmer after his father drowned in the River Danube when Alred was 13. The competition in 1896 was held in the sea near Piraeus, with the water temperature only 13° Celsius, an incentive for quick swimming. He later also won the 1,200m Freestyle when rough conditions caused 3.5-metre waves to buffet the athletes. Some 28 years later he won a prize as an architect in the Olympic Art Contest.

🏊 Hungarian Alfred Hajos was a double Olympic Games gold-medal winner in two fields: in Swimming at Athens 1896 and in Art at Paris 1924.



📌 Five-time Olympic Games gold medallist Johnny Weissmuller earned even greater fame as Tarzan in Hollywood's own golden era, appearing in 36 films.

## GROSS THE ALBATROSS

There was only one feature of the West German swimmer Michael Gross that was greater than his immense height of 2.01m (6ft 7in) – his arm-span. From fingertip to fingertip he measured 2.25 metres. He was nicknamed the 'Albatross', and used his immense reach to win three gold medals in 1984 and 1988 while setting three world records along the way.

🏊 The mighty wingspan of Germany's Michael Gross earned him not only his 'Albatross' nickname but also three Olympic Games gold medals and three world records.



## MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

American Mark Spitz was anticipating a hatful of gold medals in 1968, having won five at the previous year's Pan-American Games. He won just two, both from Relays, and in his final race, the 200m Butterfly, in which he held the world record, he finished last. Four years later, it was his first event and he won it in world record time. He went on to win seven gold medals, the first athlete in Olympic Games history to do so.

↓ *Mark Spitz was the star of the show at Munich 1972, becoming the first Olympian in history to land a haul of seven gold medals at one Games.*



↑ *There was a golden lining to a school accident for Britain's Duncan Goodhew when he won 100m Breaststroke gold at the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow.*

## GOODHEW PROVES HIS POINT

Swimmers invariably wore tight-fitted rubber caps to reduce water drag from their hair. Some even shaved their heads. Duncan Goodhew, a dyslexic Briton, did not need anything artificial. He lost his hair permanently from the trauma of falling from a tree at his Sussex school when he was ten, thereafter suffering years of adolescent abuse. His determination to overcome his problems was channelled into swimming and he won 100m Breaststroke gold at the 1980 Games.

## POPOV THE MARATHON MAN

Aleksandr Popov, a 6ft 6in Russian, was a converted backstroke swimmer who remained at the top of the rankings at 100m Freestyle for a dozen years. His first great victory was at the 1991 European Championships, but it was at Barcelona 1992 that he drew gasps. His final 50 metres was the first sub-25-second length ever recorded. He won again at Atlanta 1996, by which time he held the world record at 48.21, was second at Sydney 2000, and only missed out on the Athens 2004 final by a single place.

➔ *Russia's Aleksandr Popov celebrates after winning gold in the 100m Freestyle at Barcelona 1992. He went on to win the 50m Freestyle as well to add to his burgeoning gold-medal tally.*



## APOLOGETIC CHAMPION

Rick Carey, a New Yorker, was so disgusted with the time that won him the 200m Backstroke gold medal in 1984 that he hung his head at the Victory Ceremony and expressed only anger. He had wanted to break his own world record. So vociferous was the criticism that greeted his attitude in the American press that Carey issued a formal public apology. 'I found it very difficult to smile when my performance didn't live up to my expectations,' he wrote.

## GOLDEN SECOND CHANCE

Duke Kahanamoku, a Hawaiian of royal ancestry, won the first two rounds of the 100m Freestyle at the 1912 Games in Stockholm comfortably but, like his two American team-mates, he mistakenly believed himself to have already qualified for the final. All three missed the semi-final round, but were invited to swim off for two remaining final spots. Kahanamoku broke the world record to take one of them, and then went on to win the final by a distance of two yards.

## GOLDEN REWARD FOR ICEMAN ROSS

Richard Ross should not have taken part in the 400m Individual Medley at the Tokyo 1964 Olympic Games. Japanese doctors advised an immediate operation when he was stricken with severe appendicitis three days before his competition. The world record holder would not hear of it, however, and nor would he accept their offer of pain-killing drugs. Instead his lower torso was packed in ice until the day of the race, when he emerged to win gold in a world record time.



## FIRST BLACK CHAMPION

Competitors of African origin were a rarity at one time in pools at the Olympic Games until, at Seoul 1988, Trinidad-born Anthony Nesty proved there was no reason for it. He won the 100m Butterfly, becoming the first person from the tiny South American country of Surinam, in which there was only one 50-metre pool, to win a medal at the Olympic Games in any sport.



↑ *A moment of Olympic Games history as Surinam's Anthony Nesty becomes the first African-American athlete to win a Swimming gold medal.*

## BOY WINNER IN A MAN'S WORLD

Andrew Charlton was always known as 'Boy' because of his extreme youth when he made his name at 16, beating the great Swedish swimmer, Arne Borg. On the long voyage to Europe for the 1924 Games in Paris, his coach Tom Adrian, a First World War veteran suffering from shell shock, tried to commit suicide by throwing himself overboard. He was rescued, and Boy Charlton, determined to make him happy, beat Borg in the 1500m Freestyle, setting a new world record in the process.

## UNBROKEN RECORD

No swimmer had a record to match that of Tamas Darnyi, a Hungarian who had lost all sight in his left eye when he was hit by an icy snowball as a boy. Between 1985 and 1992 he never lost a race at either Individual Medley distance. During that time he set numerous world records and won the 200m and 400m titles at both the 1988 and 1992 Games. Two of his world records came in finals: the 200m Individual Medley in 1988 and the 400m Individual Medley in 1992.

↓ *Hungary's Tamas Darnyi was unbeatable in Individual Medley over both 200m and 400m, winning an amazing four gold medals between 1988 and 1992.*



## ONE FOR MUM

Pablo Morales expected a gold medal at the 1984 Olympics. He held the 100m Butterfly world record and broke it in the final, only for German Michael Gross to swim even faster. A relay gold and a silver came as scant consolation. In 1988, after failing to make the US team, he retired, but when his mother, Bianca, died of cancer in 1991 he vowed to win gold for her. He returned to competition before the 1992 Games and won the gold he missed out on in 1984.

## RELAY TREND-SETTERS

The USA won the first seven 4 x 100m Freestyle gold medals before Australia ended their run in unusual circumstances at Sydney 2000. Ian Thorpe had won the 400m Freestyle only 55 minutes earlier and had barely had time to complete the Victory Ceremony before he swam the final two lengths. After one length he was 0.6 seconds down on Gary Hall Jnr, bronze medallist in the individual event. Not only did he catch him, but he also finished with a 0.19 second lead for a world record.

## UNLUCKY ASTHMATIC

Rick DeMont, 16, from California, had been taking medication for asthma since he was four years old and listed those medications on an official form when he qualified for the United States team for Munich 1972. When he woke with a wheeze on the eve of the final, he took his usual drug Marax, and thought nothing of it. Later that day he won the 400m Freestyle final, and received the gold medal, but three days later was told he had failed a drug test. US team doctors had omitted to clear his drugs, an act they publicly acknowledged only 29 years later.

## HUNGARIAN FIDDLE

Hungarian swimming officials forgot to keep a record of their swimmers' times during 1996, so they 'invented' a fictional meeting in Budapest on 6-8 June, complete with results, to satisfy IOC regulations. Half of their eventual team at the Games qualified by this route, including Attila Czene, who took 200m Individual Medley gold and also broke the Olympic Games record.

## BREASTSTROKE LOOPHOLES

Breaststroke has had many techniques over the last 100 years, with the rules being inexorably tightened. Many loopholes were exploited in earlier days. In the 1930s, American swimmers began bringing their arms back above the surface, until in 1952 this was recognised as a new, different stroke, butterfly. And then, in the 1950s, the Japanese began swimming underwater because it was faster, but this was banned in 1956.



## LOCHTE SHINES BRIGHT

Ryan Lochte won five medals at London 2012, fewer than had been predicted. But, given the brilliance of rival and team-mate Michael Phelps, it was still an immensely impressive achievement. Lochte opened by beating Phelps to win the men's 400m Individual Medley, but that was his only individual gold; his other arrived as a member of the 4 x 200m Freestyle Relay team. He won two silver medals, in the 200m Individual Medley – behind Phelps – and the 4 x 100m Freestyle Relay and a bronze in the 200m Backstroke.



← Ryan Lochte is all smiles after he won the men's 400m Individual Medley on the first day of competition at London 2012.

## FANTASTIC MR PHELPS

Michael Phelps established his place in Olympic history when he rounded off his career in appropriate style at London 2012 by winning his record-extending 18th gold medal in the men's 4 x 100m Medley Relay. Phelps, who first became an Olympian at Sydney 2000 aged only 15 (he finished fifth in the men's 200m Butterfly final, his only event), returned home with six gold medals from Athens 2004, eight from Beijing 2008 and four from London 2012 – twice as many as the next competitor in any sport in the history of the modern Olympic Games. Phelps also won two silver and two bronze medals during his career, giving him a total of 22, yet another record. Soviet gymnast Larisa Latynina had held the previous record of 18 medals since 1964, but the Phelps standard may last even longer than this 48-year

gap. The capacity crowd at the Aquatics Centre, including Phelps's mother Debbie, afforded him a standing ovation, and governing body FINA presented him with a lifetime achievement award. Phelps, born on 30 June 1985, in Towson, Maryland, holds a string of world records across the pool, plus 71 medals in all major international competitions, comprising 57 gold, 11 silver, and three bronze in the Olympic Games, World Championships and Pan-Pacific Championships. Six times he had been voted World Swimmer of the Year and has won the American Swimmer of the Year Award on eight occasions. In 2008, he was named Sports Illustrated magazine's Sportsman of the Year. Phelps came out of retirement in 2014 trying to qualify for a fifth Games at Rio 2016.

## "PHELPS CAME OUT OF RETIREMENT IN 2014 TO TRY TO QUALIFY FOR RIO"

### PHANTOM WHISTLE ALMOST ECLIPSES SUN

Yang Sun smashed his own world record to win the 1500m Freestyle final and became the first man in 32 years to complete the men's 400m Freestyle/1500m Freestyle double. He won the longer race in 14:31.02, slicing more than three seconds off his previous world-record mark – though to do so he needed a little luck. Sun had tipped forward into the water after a spectator blew a whistle when the swimmers were crouched and waiting to go. He was given the starter's discretionary benefit of the doubt to stay in the race and went on to secure a place of his own in swimming history.



# SYNCHRONISED SWIMMING

A relatively new discipline to feature on the Summer Games Aquatics programme, Synchronised Swimming first appeared as an exhibition sport from 1948 to 1968 before gaining recognition as a fully-fledged discipline at Los Angeles 1984. Synchronised Swimming is one of only two sports at the Summer Games - Rhythmic Gymnastics being the other - to be contested solely by female athletes.

## COSTUME CONTROVERSY

The Spanish Synchronised Swimming team was caught up in a swimsuit controversy at Beijing 2008, when their specially designed costumes were banned from the competition. The Spaniards had planned to wear custom-made suits that were embedded with battery-powered sparkling lights, but Games officials deemed them an accessory and, as such, in breach of the rules of the event.

➔ *Spain's Synchronised Swimming team performs its routine at Beijing 2008 without their battery-powered swimsuits that were deemed to contravene competition rules.*







## WOMEN'S SWIMMING

Women's Swimming was staged for the first time at the 1912 Games in Stockholm, with 27 competitors from eight nations contesting just two events: the 100m Freestyle and the 4 x 100m Freestyle Relay. At the London 2012 Games, there were 17 women's Swimming events.

### WINDMILL IN A HURRICANE

Janet Evans, despite a tiny frame of 1.66 metres and 46 kilograms weight, was years ahead of her time. Her 400m and 800m world records set in 1988 and 1989 lasted until 2006 and 2008 respectively, an astonishing achievement in a sport in which records are broken frequently. She was swimming laps by the age of two and a year later could do both breaststroke and butterfly. She used an unusual straight-arm recovery in freestyle, saying: 'As I wanted to go down the pool the fastest, I figured the fastest way to get to the other end was to turn my arms over as fast as I could.' Evans won four gold medals over two Games and is still regarded as the premier female distance swimmer.



↑ Janet Evans was always way ahead of her time and her 400m and 800m Freestyle world records lasted 18 and 19 years respectively.

### CHANNEL TO STARDOM

Gertrude Ederle finished 'only' third in the 100m Freestyle at Paris 1924 and won gold in the 4 x 100m Relay. But two years later she earned international renown when she became the first woman to swim the English Channel. The American's time of 14 hours 31 minutes, helped by a wind-up gramophone playing popular songs on the accompanying boat, beat the men's record by almost two hours. An estimated two million people greeted her in New York, where she was welcomed by a ticker-tape parade. The city mayor described her achievement as being like 'Moses parting the Red Sea'. She recovered from a nervous breakdown in 1933 to live until she was 98, spending years teaching deaf children to swim.

➦ Gertrude Ederle put any disappointment she suffered at the 1924 Olympic Games behind her by becoming the first woman to swim the English Channel.



### DETERMINED DURACK

The honour of being the first Olympic Games women's Swimming champion went to Australia's Fanny Durack. She took the 100m Freestyle gold medal in 1912. The previous year, she had adopted the two-beat leg-kick for the Australian crawl and did not lose another race for eight years. However, the officials in charge of naming the Australian team believed it was wasteful to spend money on sending women to Sweden and refused to pay their fares. Eventually, Durack and her rival and close friend Mina Wylie were permitted to go if they raised the money themselves, and they did so by setting up a fund. In Stockholm, the pair finished first and second, after Durack had set a world record of 1 minute 19.8 seconds in the heat. Durack would go on to set 11 world records during her career from the distance of 100 yards to one mile.

↑ Fanny Durack (left) holds the distinction of winning the first-ever women's Swimming gold medal at the Olympic Games. She eased to victory in the 100m Freestyle final at Stockholm 1912 with a 3.2-second winning margin.

**"TWO MILLION PEOPLE GREETED EDERLE ON HER RETURN TO NEW YORK"**





## BRILLIANT BLEIBTREY

A pioneer of women's swimming, Ethelda Bleibtrey won every race she could enter at the 1920 Olympics – the 100m, 300m and Freestyle Relay – to become the United States' first-ever Olympic Swimming champion. Bleibtrey, who took up the sport after suffering polio, was imprisoned for indecency in 1919, because she took off her stockings before swimming at Manhattan Beach. A public outcry prompted her release. Three years later, she was arrested again when she swam in the reservoir in Central Park in New York in an attempt to force the authorities to build a public pool.

↓ *Ethelda Bleibtrey suffered from polio in early life.*



## HOLM OVER THE LIMIT

Eleanor Holm, winner of the 100m Backstroke in 1932, was favourite again in 1936. However, during the sea crossing to Europe, she outraged US officials by spending evenings carousing with other passengers and journalists and, despite a warning, drinking heavily. She was banned from competing in the Games by the US Olympic Committee led by its president, Avery Brundage, later the IOC president. Holm thus went to Berlin as a spectator and was lavishly entertained by the Nazis, despite being Jewish. Her highly publicised private life subsequently included two divorces, while her outspoken individuality was summed up in 1999, when, aged 85, she told Bill Clinton at a Washington reception: 'Mr President, you're a really good-looking dude.'

## 'ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOULD'

Those were the words with which the American women's team emblazoned their T-shirts in 1972, in defiance of the expected supremacy of the 15-year-old Australian Shane Gould – who would set 11 world records in a top-class two-year career. These included every Freestyle event from 100 to 1500m and also the 200m Individual Medley. Although American rivals won the 100m and 800m in Munich, Gould won three titles and two further medals to become the first female swimmer to take five medals at a single Games. She retired in 1973 after setting a world record in 1500m. As fellow Australian and Olympic champion Mike Wenden said: 'Shane was like a high-decibel concert that had such an impact it left your ears ringing.'

➔ *Shane Gould poses with her medals after her successes in Munich.*

## ANDERSEN OUT ON HER OWN

Greta Andersen not only won the 100m title at London 1948 but was also an outstanding long-distance performer, completing a 50-mile endurance feat. The Dane also swam the English Channel six times, setting records for the distance and regularly beating men in races across the straits. Her ability to drive herself to exhaustion was shown in the 1948 Olympic Games in London, when she was pulled out of the water unconscious in the 400m Freestyle. Four years later, in Helsinki, she reached the 400m Freestyle final, despite being able to use only one leg because she had undergone surgery on the other.



↑ *Dawn Fraser dominated the 100m Freestyle event, winning gold in 1956, 1960 and 1964.*

## FRASER'S HISTORIC HAT-TRICK

Dawn Fraser became the first swimmer, male or female, to win three gold medals in the same event at the Games. Her victories in the 100m Freestyle from 1956 to 1964 led to her being voted in 1983 as Australia's greatest female Olympian. Her last victory, in Tokyo, was achieved despite her having been involved in a car crash in February 1964 that killed her mother and saw her spend more than a month in plaster because of a damaged vertebra. Fraser had frequent clashes with officials, climaxing at the 1964 Games in Tokyo when, together with two team-mates, she tried to steal the flag from the Emperor's Palace. Although she was arrested, the Emperor gave her the flag as a souvenir. However, the Australian authorities banned her for ten years.







↑ *Susie O'Neill (left) slipped to a surprise second in the 200m Butterfly final in front of her home crowd at Sydney in the 2000 Games.*

### O'NEILL, THE UNBEATABLE LOSER

Susie O'Neill was an Olympic champion at both 200m Butterfly (1996) and 200m Freestyle (2000), but she suffered one of the biggest upsets in Swimming history at the 2000 Games when she attempted to retain her 200m Butterfly title in Sydney. Not only was she competing before her home crowd, but she had also not lost at the distance for six years, had broken a 19-year-old world record and had just won the 200m Freestyle gold medal. The American Misty Hyman, who had had been ill in the build-up to the Games, won the final by 0.70 seconds.

### THE MOUSE THAT ROARED

Krisztina Egerszegi was nicknamed the 'Mouse' by her Hungarian team-mates – Eger means 'mouse' in Hungarian – but there was nothing diminutive about her achievements. She won five Olympic titles, including three successive golds in the 200m Backstroke, emulating the feat of Australian Dawn Fraser. Yet she ranked her 200m Backstroke world record at the 1991 European Championships as probably her favourite moment. Her time of 2 minutes 06.62 seconds brought her a ten-minute standing ovation, and the mark lasted until 2008. She possessed a superbly smooth stroke, in which her long, purple-painted fingernails were also a trademark. In the later stages of her career, she opened a restaurant in Budapest, called The Mousehole.

### DONNA DEVARONA

Blonde Californian Donna DeVarona won two gold medals in 1964, including the first-ever 400m Individual Medley. She also became the cover girl for magazines such as Sports Illustrated, Life and Time. Between 1960 and 1964, she was the best all-round female swimmer in the world. Subsequently, she travelled extensively as a sports commentator and a campaigner for women in sport, co-founding the Women's Sports Foundation.

### AMERICA'S RECORD BREAKER

Natalie Coughlan won an individual gold medal in the women's 100m Backstroke at Athens 2004 and was part of the United States' world record-breaking, gold medal-winning quartet in the women's 4 x 200m Freestyle Relay. Four years later, at Beijing 2008, she was one of the stars of the show, winning gold in the women's 100m Backstroke (to become the first woman in history to defend her Backstroke title at the Games), silver medals as part of the US women's 4 x 100m Freestyle Relay and 4 x 100m Medley Relay quartets and bronze medals in the women's 100m Freestyle, the women's 200m Individual Medley and the women's 4 x 200m Freestyle Relay. In doing so, she became the first female American athlete in modern history to win six medals at one Games.



### MISS ALL-ROUNDER

Tracy Caulkins was perhaps the most versatile swimmer in history – yet she competed at only one Olympic Games, at Los Angeles 1984, because the United States boycotted the 1980 Games. In 1978, aged only 15, Caulkins won five gold medals, including both medleys, at the World Championships, but she never really overcame being unable to compete in Moscow. Still, in 1984, she was named her country's Sportswoman of the Year when she won both Individual Medleys and also swam the breaststroke leg for the victorious Medley Relay quartet.



## HISTORY FOR ADLINGTON

Rebecca Adlington won Britain's only women's Swimming medals at London 2012, bronze medals in the 400m Freestyle and 800m Freestyle, events in which she had won gold at Beijing 2008. Adlington produced a remarkable performance to win bronze in the 400m Freestyle after struggling to qualifying eighth fastest. She made history as Britain's first female swimmer to win individual medals in successive Olympic Games and was consoled by an outpouring of public appreciation for her inspirational example. She responded with a grateful observation: 'People have sent me messages saying, "you made me get into swimming", "you made me get into sport" and that is the best reaction of all. If I can inspire just one person to get into the pool that is an amazing feeling.'



↑ Rebecca Adlington won two of the four medals achieved by Great Britain at the Aquatics Centre at London 2012, both of them bronze.

## LEDECKY LORDS IT

American teenager Katie Ledecky scored a remarkable victory in the women's 800m Freestyle final at London 2012 that comprehensively ended home favourite Rebecca Adlington's hopes of repeating her Beijing 2008 success. Ledecky, at 15 the youngest member of the American team, commanded the entire length of the race to take gold in 8:14.63, and only missed breaking the world record by half a second. She also finished an impressive four seconds clear of Spain's Mireia Belmonte Garcia who took her second silver of the Games, having finished runner-up in the 200m Butterfly two days earlier. Belmonte Garcia had promised to do a parachute jump if she won a medal at the London 2012 Games.

**"LEDECKY, AGED JUST 15, COMMANDED THE ENTIRE RACE TO TAKE GOLD IN 8:14.63"**

## HIGH-SPEED TEEN

Shiwen Ye proved the latest young Chinese star to surprise the swimming world. The 16-year-old won two gold medals at London 2012, but it was the manner in which she smashed the women's 400m Individual Medley world record, with a time five seconds faster than her personal best, that was astonishing. She won the first by covering the penultimate, freestyle lap of the 400m Individual Medley faster than Michael Phelps had done in the men's final, and her last lap quicker than Ryan Lochte's when he won the male equivalent. Her time broke (4:28.43) the world record, set by Stephanie Rice at Beijing 2008, by three seconds. 'I was just trying my best to come from behind,' said Ye, who won her second gold three days later in the 200m Individual Medley. She was fourth at the end of the first leg and third at the start of the final leg.

↓ Shiwen Ye broke both world and Olympic records with superb final-sector swims in the 200m Individual Medley and 400m Individual Medley.





# WATER POLO

Water Polo was the first team sport to be contested in the Olympic Games, making its debut in Paris in 1900. Having evolved into two different forms, in the United States and Europe, it began as an inherently violent sport – largely because of the more brutal version preferred in the US, in which outright violence, injuries and near-drownings were part of the game. Today, however, matches are played to European rules.

## HUNGARIAN DOMINATION

The Hungarians have been by far the greatest ambassadors of Water Polo at the Olympic Games. They won medals at every single one of the Games between 1928 and 1980, and between 1932 and 1976 won six of the ten gold medals available. At Sydney 2000, Hungary resurfaced as a powerhouse in the discipline, winning the seventh gold medal in their history. The country continued its dominance at Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008, when they claimed gold at both Games.

➔ *The Hungary team celebrates victory at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. It was the second of an unprecedented nine Water Polo gold medals for the country, the latest of which was won at Beijing in 2008.*



## CLEAN SWEEP

The record books show that, at the 1904 Games in St Louis, the United States won all the available medals in the Water Polo competition – gold, silver and bronze. That historical anomaly came about because other nations refused to compete in what was perceived to be the more violent version of the sport that was commonplace in the States and to which the event was due to be staged. In due course the International Olympic Committee adopted the more strategic, faster and less violent European style of Water Polo, which went on to be featured at the following 1908 Games in London, and which is practised universally today.



## WOMEN'S LONG WAIT

Women had to wait a full century before they contested Water Polo at the Games. In 2000 in Sydney, a full 100 years after the debut of the discipline, women's Water Polo made its first official appearance at the Olympic Games, with the Australian team claiming gold before an ecstatic home crowd.

◀ *Australia became the first team to win women's Water Polo gold when they beat the United States 4-3 in the final at Sydney in 2000.*

**“100 YEARS AFTER THE SPORT'S DEBUT, AUSTRALIA WON THE FIRST WOMEN'S WATER POLO GOLD”**





↑ Hungary's Ervin Zador suffers a gashed eye in the infamous 1956 semi-final.

## BLOOD IN THE WATER

Few sporting encounters have been more politically charged than when Hungary met the Soviet Union in the semi-final of the Water Polo competition at Melbourne 1956 – often referred to as 'the blood in the water match'. When the Hungarian team set off for Australia, the Soviet army had begun the invasion that would topple their country's reformist leaders. The match started with verbal taunts and soon became extraordinarily violent. With Hungary leading 4-0, blood staining the pool and the crowd on the verge of rioting, the match was brought to an early end, with Hungary declared the winners. They went on to claim gold.

## WATER TORTURE

Having won three consecutive gold medals in Water Polo (at Sydney 2000, Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008) – and having collected Water Polo gold on a further six occasions (in 1932, 1936, 1952, 1956, 1964 and 1972), Hungary were firm favourites to retain their title at London 2012. However, after defeats by Serbia, Montenegro and Italy they could only finish fifth. Croatia, instead, were crowned men's Olympic Water Polo champions for the first time after seeing off Italy, the only non-Balkan semi-finalists. Hungary also failed to win a medal in the women's event, losing the bronze medal match 13-11 to Australia.

➔ Croatia ended Hungary's domination of the men's Water Polo competition winning the gold medal for the first time when they beat Italy 8-6 in the final.

## HUNGARIAN MASTERS

Hungary's impressive record at the Games is evidence that they boast some of the most celebrated Water Polo players of all time. Among them was Oliver Halassy, who represented Hungary in 1928, 1932 and 1936, winning two gold medals and a silver. His athletic ability is made even more remarkable by the fact that he had his left leg amputated below the knee following a traffic accident as a child. Another great Hungarian player was Dezs Gyarmati, often hailed as the greatest-ever water polo player. His record of winning a medal at five different Games from 1948 to 1964 (three golds, one silver and one bronze) has never been matched.

➔ Halassy represented Hungary at three Olympics.



## SHARP-SHOOTER STEFFENS

Twelve years of near misses came to an end when the United States won the women's Water Polo gold medal at London 2012 to provide a career-ending high for veterans Heather Petri and Brenda Villa. The two had won medals for the Americans each time since women's Water Polo made its Olympic Games debut at Sydney 2000. The star of their ultimate 8-5 defeat of Spain was 19-year-old Maggie Steffens, who scored five goals in the final to finish with a total of 21. Unbeaten Spain – making their Olympic Games debut – had tied the United States 9-9 in the preliminary round, but never recovered in the final after Steffens scored three goals in six minutes to give the USA a 5-2 half-time lead.





# ATHLETICS

The centrepiece of the Olympic Games for many, track and field Athletics continue to dazzle spectators as they have for more than a century

➔ Great Britain's Jessica Ennis won the women's Heptathlon at London 2012. A stress foot injury in 2008 meant that she missed Beijing 2008 and had to learn to jump off her 'wrong' foot.









# MEN'S 100M

It might be the shortest outdoor sprint race, but it's often also the most spectacular and always the most watched. The men's 100m is the Olympic Games' blue riband event, a lightning-quick demonstration of speed and power, with the winner awarded the moniker 'The Fastest Man on Earth'. The event has been staged at every Games since Athens in 1896, and continues to draw the biggest crowd of the entire Games..

## HOW IT ALL STARTED

The first man to be credited with a 100m world record, albeit in the years before the IAAF, the sport's governing body, was formed in 1912, was Britain's William MacLaren. He was given a time of 11.00 seconds as part of a run over 110 yards at Haslingden, in Lancashire, on 27 July 1867. It was seven years short of a century before the 100m was run in ten seconds – Armin Hary of West Germany did so in Zurich on 21 July 1960. American Jim Hines was the first man to break the ten-second barrier, winning gold in 9.95s at Mexico City 1968.

## STARTING OVER...

Nowadays, any athlete who false-starts in the 100m faces instant disqualification, but the rules have varied. Before the IAAF voted in 2009 to bring in the current rule, one false start was allowed in any race without sanction, with anyone subsequently offending being disqualified. Before that the rule was that each athlete was entitled to one false start, but would be disqualified in the event of a second, a fate Britain's defending champion Linford Christie suffered before the men's 100m final at Atlanta 1996. Different rules applied in the modern Games' early years. The men's 100m final at Stockholm 1912, won by Ralph Craig of the United States in a time of 10.8 seconds, was marred by seven false starts, the first three of which came from the eventual gold medallist. Thirty-six years later, Craig, then 59, reappeared at the Games as a member of the US Sailing team, and carried the US flag at the Opening Ceremony in Wembley Stadium. He only needed one attempt at this.

## OLD GOLD...

In a bizarre set of circumstances, the men's 100m final at the Los Angeles Games in 1932 was so close that if current rules had been applied then the silver medallist, Ralph Metcalfe, would have won, rather than compatriot Eddie Tolan. Both men recorded a Games record time of 10.3 seconds, but the verdict went to the first man to fully cross the finish line. Under today's rules Metcalfe would have got the decision as he was the first man to reach the line before crossing it.



## AMERICANS MISS THE BUS

At Munich 1972 the men's 100m title was won by Valeriy Borzov of the Soviet Union, whose time of 10.14 seconds saw him finish one-tenth of a second clear of the field. Borzov had arrived at Munich as favourite – but who knows how he might have fared had Stan Wright, the US sprint coach in Munich, had the right bus timetable? Wright set off from the Olympic Village with his country's two top sprinters, Eddie Hart and Rey Robinson, accompanied by the third US 100m man Robert Taylor, in what he thought was good time for their second round of races on the evening of 31 August. But Wright was working to an out-of-date timetable, and rather than starting at 7pm, as he thought, the second round got underway at 4.15pm. While they waited for their bus, to their horror, the group saw a live TV transmission of the first race. Despite being rushed to the stadium in a TV car, Hart and Robinson, both of whom had clocked 9.9 seconds in the US Olympic trials, arrived too late to take part. Taylor just made his heat, however, and went on to take silver behind the Soviet star.

↑ *The Soviet Union's Valeriy Borzov raises his arm in celebration as he wins the men's 100m final at the 1972 Games in Munich.*

## TRACK STUDENT

Six months of extensive training, which placed an emphasis on his start, stride pattern and form, paid dividends for Great Britain's Harold Abrahams at the 1924 Games in Paris. Although only considered an outside bet for the men's 100m title, he clocked 10.6 seconds in the final to take gold. Sadly, a broken leg ended his athletics career the following year.



## BRILLIANT BOLT

Usain Bolt improved his 100m world record to 9.58 seconds at the 2009 World Championships in Berlin. Bolt held the two previous marks too, having become the first man to break 9.70s, at Beijing 2008, in a time of 9.69. A year later, Bolt set a new world mark of 9.58 and, at London 2012, Bolt retained his 'World's Fastest Man' tag by the winning the gold medal in a time of 9.63.

➔ *Usain Bolt celebrates his decisive victory in the final of the men's 100m at Beijing 2008 with panache.*

## BAILEY'S SPEED DOUBLE

Canada's Donovan Bailey reached a speed of 27mph during a 10-metre stretch in winning the men's 100m title at Atlanta 1996 in a new world record time of 9.84 seconds. Both those measures of speed were topped by Jamaica's Usain Bolt, who won the men's 100m and 200m titles at Beijing 2008 in world records of 9.69 and 19.30 respectively, before adding world titles the following year in times of 9.58 and 19.19. In the latter 100m race, Bolt was clocked at 27.45mph.

**"IN 2009 BOLT SET A NEW WORLD RECORD MARK OF 9.58"**

## SUPER ACHIEVER

Robert Hayes, who won the men's 100m title at Tokyo 1964 went on to spend nine years playing American football for the Dallas Cowboys as a wide receiver. He is the only athlete to have earned an Olympic gold medal and a Super Bowl victory ring.



## THE LEGEND OF JESSE OWENS

Winning the men's 100m at the controversial Berlin Games in 1936 was only a start for sprinting legend Jesse Owens, a sharecropper's son who defied the racist Nazi propaganda of the time, in which the Americans were taunted over their use of 'black auxiliaries'. Though the Nazi regime was far from welcoming to Owens, the German spectators, by contrast, offered him warm support throughout the Games as he went on to add further golds in the 200m, the Long Jump and the 4 x 100m Relay – an achievement his fellow American Carl Lewis replicated at Los Angeles 1984. Owens had managed an even more astonishing athletic feat the year before, when he broke five world records and equalled a sixth in the space of 45 minutes while competing for his university in Michigan.

⬅ *Jesse Owens explodes off the start-line en route to claiming gold in a world record-breaking time of 20.7 seconds in the men's 200m final at Berlin 1936.*



# MEN'S 200M AND 400M

The men's 200m, contested at every Games since 1900, starts on the curve and finishes on the home straight. It attracts several competitors from the men's 100m and the 100m-200m double has been achieved on nine occasions at the Games – most recently by Usain Bolt. The men's 400m is contested over a single lap of the track and has been staged at every Games since Athens 1896.

## THE PRIDE OF PARIS

The United States' John Tewkesbury won the first-ever men's 200m title, at Paris 1900, in a time of 22.2 seconds. It was his fifth medal of the Games (having taken gold in the 400m Hurdles, silver in the 60m and 100m Sprints and bronze in the 200m Hurdles).

## REYNOLDS TOO LATE

In 1988, Butch Reynolds was the hot favourite to win the men's 400m title in Seoul, having recently beaten the 20-year-old world record of 43.86 seconds run by his fellow American Lee Evans when he took gold at Mexico City in 1968. Reynolds had no altitude advantage as he recorded his mark of 43.29 in the Zurich meeting, but in the final in Seoul, he left himself with too much to do after lying fifth with 100 metres to go and just failed to catch the winner, team-mate Steve Lewis, at the line and had to be content with a silver medal.



↑ A clean sweep of medals in the men's 400m at Seoul 1988 for the US. From left to right: Butch Reynolds, Steve Lewis and Danny Everett.

## FROZEN IN HISTORY

Unlike his 200m record, Michael Johnson's men's 400m world record of 43.18, set at the 1999 World Championships in Seville, did survive Beijing 2008 and the 2009 World Championships. His 1999 time bettered the mark of 43.29 set 11 years earlier by fellow American Butch Reynolds.

## FACT AND FICTION

American Jackson Scholz, who won men's 200m gold at Paris 1924, later wrote sports fiction and published an impressive 31 novels throughout his life. Another piece of fiction brought him to public attention years later at the age of 84. In the 1981 Oscar-winning film *Chariots of Fire*, Scholz is seen handing a religious message to Britain's Eric Liddell, a committed Christian, before the start of the men's 400m final, which Liddell went on to win. Scholz, however, later proclaimed that the incident had never actually happened.

## BLACK POWER PROTEST

The men's 200m final at Mexico City 1968 produced a world record run by Tommie Smith, who clocked 19.83 in the thin air. But the event is remembered more for what happened at the Victory Ceremony. As the American national anthem played, Smith and his US team-mate John Carlos, the bronze medallist, bowed their heads and raised black-gloved hands in a Black Power salute as a protest against racial inequality in the United States. Australia's silver medallist Peter Norman joined in their protest, wearing a civil rights badge they had given him. Both Americans were subsequently shunned by the US athletics establishment. Thirty-four years later, at the Opening Ceremony at Sydney 2000, Norman was conspicuous by his absence among past Australian medallists.

↓ *Brothers in arms: Tommie Smith (centre) and John Carlos (right) make their famous salute at the 1968 Games in Mexico City.*



## QUICK CUBAN HEELS

Alberto Juantorena Danger of Cuba, winner of the men's 800m title at Montreal 1976 in a world record time of 1:43.50, went on to win the men's 400m final in a time of 44.26 seconds. In so doing he became the first man to win the 400m-800m double – apart from Paul Pilgrim at the 1906 'Intercalated' Games. Juantorena was nicknamed 'El Caballo' – The Horse.





## SHARE IN HISTORY

If the 100m at London 2012 was a showdown, the 200m was a chance to grab history. Usain Bolt could become the first man ever to complete the 'double-double', win both sprints at consecutive Olympic Games. Compatriot Yohan Blake, who had beaten Bolt in the Jamaican trials, was thought to be his biggest rival. Both men eased to semi-final victories, in Blake's case almost going down to walking pace at the finish. In the final, Bolt made one of the best starts of his career, taking a clear lead at 100m. Blake appeared to close the gap but, just as in the shorter sprint, Bolt pulled clear of his friend to etch his name into the history books.

➔ *Usain Bolt held off the challenge of training partner Yohan Blake in the 200m final at London 2012 to retain both of his sprint titles.*

## JAMAICAN TREBLE

Jamaica is a small place, a Caribbean island home to just under three million people, but it is also home to some very special people. The whole world knew about Usain Bolt, most were aware of Yohan Blake but, apart from track and field fanatics, Warren Weir was not a name familiar to many. The appearance of the slight 22-year-old in the 200m as the third-string Jamaican was a revelation. He received words of encouragement from Bolt at the start before the great man blasted past him inside 60m. Yet Weir did not wilt under the pressure, surging instead in the straight to claim bronze. Apparently, the next great Jamaican sprinter had been unveiled.

➔ *Kirali James celebrates his victory in the men's 400m at London 2012, becoming Grenada's first-ever medallist.*

## THORNTON'S MARKER

The first man credited with a world 200m record was Percy Thornton (Britain), although his time of 24.00 seconds at the West London Ground on 24 February 1886 was set over 220 yards (201.17 metres). The IAAF first started differentiating world records over the 200m straight and the 200m made on a full turn in 1951, when Andrew Stansfield (US) set a world record of 20.6 over 220 yards on the turn. The first man officially credited with breaking 20 seconds was Tommie Smith (US), who clocked 19.83 to win gold in the men's 200m final at Mexico City 1968.

## JAMES' BREAKTHROUGH

Grenada is not famous for many things. The small Caribbean island, 100km north of Venezuela, is an occasional venue for international cricket, but it is also home to the world's best 400m runner – Kirali James. A brilliant junior career earned him a college scholarship in America and James was crowned world No.1 in 2011. At London 2012, he became Olympic champion with a consummate performance. His time of 43.94 was the first time a non-American had dipped under 44 seconds in the 400m and it was Grenada's first-ever Olympic medal of any hue. The other medallists were also from the Caribbean – Luguelin Santos (Dominican Republic) won silver and Lalone Gordon (Trinidad & Tobago) bronze. Remarkably, no American made the men's 400m final, an event they have dominated in the past.





# MEN'S 110M AND 400M HURDLES

The men's 110m Hurdles is staged over ten 1.067-metre-high hurdles and has been contested at every Olympic Games since 1896. The men's 400m Hurdles, on the other hand, is staged over one lap of the track (over ten evenly spaced 0.914m-high hurdles) and has been contested since 1900.

## MEN'S 110M HURDLES RECORDS TUMBLE

The first official record holder in the sprint hurdles was Britain's Philip Norman, who was timed over the 120 yards (109.73 metres) hurdles at 18.00 seconds. The first IAAF world record holder was Forrest Smithson of the United States, who won gold at the 1908 Games in London in 15.00. In 1936, another American Forrest – Berlin gold-medallist Forrest Towns – became the first man to break the 14-second barrier, winning at Oslo in 13.7. Another American broke the 13-second barrier: Ronaldo Nehemiah, 12.93 at Zurich in 1981.

## A DROP OF BAD LUCK

As Boyd Gittens set off in the men's 400m Hurdles semi-final at the 1968 US Olympic trials, a pigeon dropping hit him in the eye and dislodged his contact lens before he reached the first hurdle. Happily he was able to take part in a run-off, where he secured his place in the United States squad for Mexico City. Sadly, a leg injury forced him to withdraw from his first-round heat.

## MOSES LEAVES WORLD IN THE WILDERNESS

In securing gold at Los Angeles 1984, Ed Moses extended an astonishing winning streak over 400m Hurdles. Having lost to Harald Schmid on 26 August 1977, the American got his own back a week later by beating the West German by a 15-yard margin and from then on he remained unbeaten all the way through the 1984 Games and until 4 June 1987, when his long reign was ended by fellow countryman Danny Harris.

← *The highlight of Ed Moses' domination of the men's 400m Hurdles came with a gold medal victory at Los Angeles 1984.*



↑ *Canada's Mark McKoy storms into the lead during the men's 110m Hurdles final at Barcelona 1992. He held on to his lead to take gold.*

## THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR

Colin Jackson, the men's 110m Hurdles silver medallist at Seoul 1988, was favoured to go one better at Barcelona 1992, and he did finish the Games with a personal best time to his credit. Unfortunately for Jackson, his time of 13.10 seconds came in the opening round, and the gold went to Mark McKoy of Canada in 13.12 as Jackson, who had suffered a minor injury during the semi-final, faded to seventh in 13.46. Welshman Jackson's consolation after a stellar career was to have been crowned world champion twice, Commonwealth champion twice and European champion four times. The year before Barcelona 1992, Jackson had invited McKoy and his family to move in and they both trained under the guidance of Malcolm Arnold – who had guided John Akii-Bua to men's 400m Hurdles gold at Munich 1972. The year after the Games in Barcelona, McKoy beat Jackson to the world indoor title on home territory in Toronto after benefiting from a flying start. The two remain friends.

## CURTIS AND THE CALCULATED GAMBLE

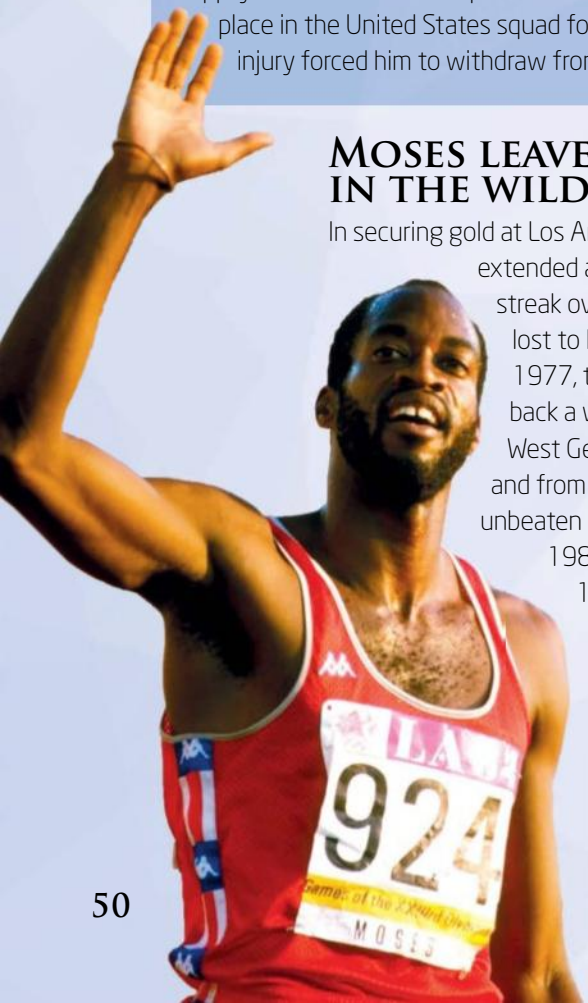
US athlete Thomas Curtis won the inaugural men's 110m Hurdles final at Athens 1896. Despite having qualified for the men's 100m final, Curtis chose not to contest it in order to concentrate on the sprint hurdles. His decision paid off.

## TAKING ATHLETICS TO BED

Earl Thomson, the Canadian who won the men's 110m Hurdles title at Antwerp 1920 in a world record time of 14.8 seconds, took his sport very seriously. As a pre-race ritual the night before competing, he used to tie his legs to the end of the bed so he wouldn't curl up and risk his muscles cramping.

## THIRD REFERRED

The first Games final result to be amended following a video replay was in 1932. American 110m hurdler Jack Keller was awarded the bronze medal after finishing in 14.8 seconds, but after viewing the race, judges revised the result and gave third place to Britain's Donald Finlay, also timed at 14.8. Keller sought out Finlay in the Olympic Village and passed the medal on.





## FAVOURITE FINISHES FIRST

The list of 'world leading' times and distances in each Athletics event issued before a major Games is the form guide. Thankfully, recent history does not always prove a reliable harbinger of Olympic fact. Favourites do not always win ... but the 110m Hurdles final at London 2012 was definitely an example of an instance when they did. It was written in the stars that American Aries Merritt would win and many thought the world record could be challenged by the only consistent sub-13-second hurdler that year. A slight headwind militated against that, but a time of 12.92 was far too good for everyone else, even world champion Jason Richardson. Merritt finished just 0.01 seconds behind Liu Xiang's Olympic record. Students of form had their champion.

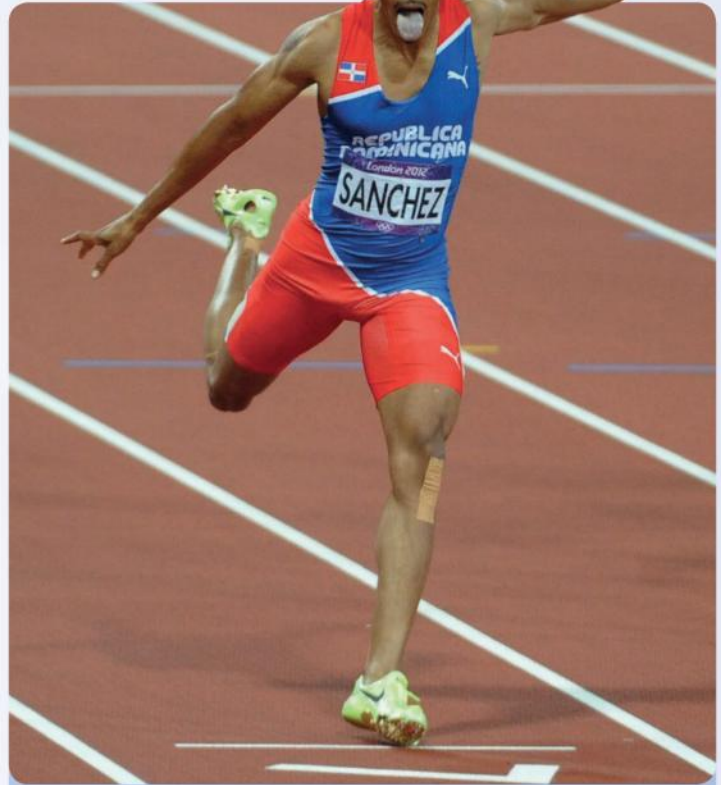
↓ *Aries Merritt (red top with white side) won gold at London 2012.*



## BREAKING THE BARRIERS

Britain's N. Paterson is the first athlete credited with a world record in the 400m Hurdles, clocking 67.00 seconds at Eltham on 27 April 1867. American Charles Bacon became the first world record holder of the IAAF era in winning the 1908 Olympic title in 55.00. The first man to break the 50-second barrier was Glenn David (United States), who ran 49.5 in 1956. Another American, Geoffrey Vanderstock, was the first to break 49 seconds, recording 48.8 in the US trials before Mexico City 1968.

**"THE 110M HURDLES WORLD RECORD WAS LOWERED TO 12.87 BY DAYRON ROBLES OF CUBA IN 2008"**



↑ *Felix Sanchez (left) turned back the clock at London 2012.*

## FELIX KEPT ON RUNNING

The old cliché that yesterday's heroes should never come back was disproved, at least, in the 400m Hurdles at London 2012. Felix Sanchez ruled this event in the early part of the 21st century. The man from the Dominican Republic won 43 straight races between 2001 and 2004, including the Olympic final in 2004. The shining light then faded somewhat as all the titles earned during that invincible period were lost and winning the title at London 2012, at the age of 34, seemed an impossible dream. His form was indifferent and others were way ahead of him on the ranking list. However, he progressed through the rounds and then looked good in the semi-final. In the final he was even better: he powered down the home straight to finish in exactly the same time he had recorded at Athens 2004 to take the gold medal.

## TEN YEARS UNBEATEN AND THE NINE FASTEST TIMES FOR MOSES

During almost a decade in which the legendary Ed Moses remained unbeaten over men's 400m Hurdles, he managed to produce the nine fastest times ever run in the event. Moses brought the world record down to 47.02 seconds, a time that only one man, fellow American Kevin Young, has since bettered when he clocked 46.78 to win gold at the Barcelona Games in 1992. Moses set his first world record (47.13) on 3 July 1980, beating the eight-year-old mark of 47.82 set by Uganda's John Akii-Bua at Munich 1972: the first time an athlete had broken the mythical 48-second barrier.



## MEN'S 800M AND 1500M

The men's 800m is the shortest middle-distance track event (run over two laps) and requires both speed and endurance. The men's 1500m is considered the premier middle-distance race and has produced some legendary champions at the Games. Both events have been contested at every Games since Athens 1896.



↑ The British trio of (from left to right) Steve Ovett, Steve Cram and Sebastian Coe hit the front during the men's 1500m final at Moscow 1980.

### BRITISH ATHLETES COE AND OVETT GET IT WRONG – AND RIGHT

Even though the United States boycotted Moscow 1980, most observers were happy that the world's best two men's 800m and 1500m runners were present – the British pair of Sebastian Coe and Steve Ovett. Coe was widely expected to win the 800m (at which he held the world record), and Ovett the metric mile (in which he equalled Coe's world record of 3:32.1 on the eve of the Games and remained unbeaten in 42 races). Each left Moscow with a gold medal – but the 'wrong' gold. First Ovett took the 800m title with a characteristically bold flourish as Coe misjudged his tactics. But tactics favoured Coe in the longer final as East Germany's Jurgen Straub made a long run for home over the final 800 metres. Both Britons responded, but it was Coe who crossed the line in an agony of ecstasy. The ecstasy of redemption.

### NOT MEANT TO BE

At Mexico City 1968, men's 1500m world record holder American Jim Ryun suffered heartbreak as he finished second behind Kenya's Kip Keino. Four years later in Munich, Ryun – still world record holder – was again expected to win gold. It was not to be, however, as he tripped and fell in his qualifying heat, missing out on the final.

### MAXIMUM RETURNS

London accountants Price Waterhouse granted their 22-year-old Australian employee Edwin Flack a month's holiday in 1896 so that he could compete in the first modern Olympic Games. He made the most of it, winning gold in the 1500m and, two days later, in the 800m – on the morning of which he had played in the Tennis tournament. He also took part in the Marathon.

### PERFECT CHAMPION

Heading into the 1960 Games, Herb Elliott had won 44 consecutive races at either 1500m or one mile, but despite opening up a 15-metre lead with a lap remaining in the men's 1500m final he did not allow himself to relax until he crossed the line in a world record time of 3:35.6. Time after time Elliott had practised for his biggest race by imagining an opponent on his shoulder who would be able to sense any weakness in him. 'I had practised a million times being challenged and winning that challenge,' said the Australian, who retired after his victory, unbeaten, and only 22.

↓ The 1960 men's 1500m medallists (from left to right): Michel Jazy (silver), Herb Elliott (gold) and Itsvan Rozsavolgi (bronze).



### THIRD TIME LUCKY

Algeria's Noureddine Morceli dominated 1500m and mile events between 1991 and 1996, but suffered the agony of finishing seventh at Barcelona 1992 in a slow, tactical race won by home favourite Fermin Cacho. Four years later, at Atlanta 1996, Morceli took men's 1500m gold, but only after the next rising star in the event, Morocco's Hicham El Guerrouj, had fallen. By the time of Sydney 2000, El Guerrouj dominated this distance as Morceli had done, but the Moroccan finished stunned and tearful after he was beaten to the line by Kenya's Noah Ngeny. Four years later, in Athens, it all came right for El Guerrouj, just as it had done for Morceli. He completed the men's 1500m-5000m double.





↑ *United States athlete Dave Wottle races to gold in the final stages of the men's 800m final at Munich 1972.*

## HEADS UP

American Dave Wottle always wore a battered golf cap when he ran, and he did so in the 800m final at Munich 1972, in which he passed Russia's Yevgheny Arzhanov just before the line to win gold by 0.03 seconds. The young runner was so shocked that he forgot to remove the cap during the Victory Ceremony and only did so when a reporter asked whether he was staging a demonstration. Wottle then made a tearful, heartfelt apology to his fellow countrymen.

## SECOND TIME LUCKY

Taoufik Makhloufi created many column inches at London 2012, but not only as a gold-medal winner in the 1500m following in the rich tradition of North African middle-distance performers. No Olympic Games proceeds without generating plenty of talking points and when Makhloufi powered down the home straight towards glory in the 'metric mile', his strength and focus created a sensation. He ran the final metres majestically clear of the field. Yet, only the previous day, injury had prevented him completing his 800m heat. Makhloufi had jogged the opening 150m of that race before pulling up and he was disqualified from the event for not trying hard enough. Later, on appeal, he was reinstated after a doctor's assessment supported the claim that he had not been 100 per cent fit.

↓ *Taoufik Makhloufi won the men's 1500m title at London 2012.*



↑ *David Rudisha's world record triumph in the 800m was one of the iconic moments of London 2012.*

## RUDISHA ON FIRE

Kenyan 800m runner David Rudisha was one of the hottest favourites for Athletics gold at London 2012. Even the legendary Usain Bolt had not been seen as such a certainty. Non track-and-field fans may have looked aghast at that statement, but the fact is, for the previous two years, the elegant Kenyan had utterly dominated the men's 800m. The London 2012 Games were witness to one of the greatest runs in Athletics history – the first time anyone had gone under 1.41 in the 800m. Rudisha set off from the gun like a man on a mission. He went through the bell in 48 seconds, an impossibly fast pace for the first 400m, but Rudisha was on his way to greatness and he crossed the line in an incredible time of 1:40.91.

## WORLD RECORDS

The men's 800m world record currently stands at 1:40.91, set by David Rudisha in the men's 800m final at London 2012, beating the record that he himself had set in Rieti, Italy, on 29 August 2010 – just a week after the Kenyan had bettered Wilson Kipketer's 13-year-old world mark of 1:41.09. Kipketer, a naturalised Dane born in Kenya, set his first outright world record of 1:41.24 in Zurich on 13 August 1997 before reducing it to 1:41.11 in Cologne 11 days later. Kipketer eclipsed an even longer standing world record – the mark of 1:41.73 set by Seb Coe in Florence in 1981, which Kipketer first equalled in July 1997.

The first credited men's 800m world record was a now seemingly rather quaint 2:05, which Britain's J. Blackwood ran over 880 yards (804.68 metres) at Addiscombe on 25 April 1857. In the professional ranks, however, Britain's John Leyland was timed at 2:01 at Peckham on 1 November 1847. Morocco's Hicham El Guerrouj set the current men's 1500m world record (3:26.00) at Rome on 14 July 1998, beating the mark of 3:27.37 set by Algeria's Noureddine Morceli three years earlier. British athlete Steve Cram produced the first sub-3:30 time when he won the event at Nice on 16 July 1985 in 3:29.67. France's J. Borel was the first credited world record holder in the 1500m with a time of 4:22.60 in 1892.



# MEN'S 5000M AND 10,000M

The track's longest distance races, the 5000m and 10,000m, challenge an athlete's speed and endurance. The two events were introduced at the 1912 Games in Stockholm and many athletes have competed in both over the years with the double achieved on eight occasions, most recently by Britain's Mo Farah at London 2012.

## WORLD RECORDS

Between the wars, the men's 5000m world record was dominated by Finns, but the first great leaps were taken in the mid-1950s – the mark being reduced by 22 seconds in just three years. In 1987, Said Aouita ran the first sub-13-minute race. Vladimir Kuts, Ron Clarke and Haile Gebrselassie have each broken the record four times. The men's 10,000m has seen a more steady erosion of its record, although the current mark is over five minutes faster than the original standard set in 1912. The first landmark barrier, 30 minutes, was broken by Finn Taisto Maki in 1938, but the achievement of Emil Zatopek is unsurpassed. He lowered the record by more than 40 seconds over the course of five epic runs. No one has broken the men's 10,000m record on more occasions.

↓ *Such was his domination of the race, Morocco's Said Aouita finds time to wave to the crowd en route to winning the men's 5000m final at the 1984 Games in Los Angeles.*



↑ *Finland's Paavo Nurmi crosses the finishing line to take gold in the men's 5000m final at the 1924 Games in Paris.*

## NURMI THE 'FLYING FINN'

Finland produced a string of world-beating long-distance runners in the first half of the 20th century, but the greatest of them all was Paavo Nurmi. This phenomenon from the Baltic port of Turku won a record nine gold medals across five distances at three Games in the 1920s (1920, 1924 and 1928) and set 35 world records from 1500m to 20km. No wonder his fellow countrymen decided to erect a statue in his honour outside the Olympic Stadium in Helsinki. The only thing he did not achieve was the 5000m-10,000m double at a single Olympic Games.







## HEROES FROM AFRICA'S HORN

Ethiopians have won six of the eight gold medals awarded for the 10,000m since 1996. It took a while for the successors to Miruts Yifter to come through, but in Haile Gebrselassie and Kenenisa Bekele the East African state has produced two of the all-time greats. Gebrselassie burst on to the scene in the 1990s and progressed to become the pre-eminent marathon runner. Bekele took over his crown as king of the men's 10,000m in 2004 and four years later laid claim to being the best ever at half the distance. Bekele is also arguably the finest cross-country performer the world has ever seen.

← *Ethiopia's Sileshi Sihine outsprints compatriot Haile Gebrselassie to take men's 10,000m silver at Athens 2004.*

## THEN THERE WERE SEVEN

Only six men had achieved the fabled 5000m/10,000m double in Olympic Games history, and none had been British. Mo Farah stood on the start line of the 5,000m with the chance to join the legends in that exclusive club: Hannes Kolehmainen, Emil Zatopek, Vladimir Kuts, Lasse Viren (twice), Miruts Yifter and Kenenisa Bekele. The race proceeded in a predictably cagey fashion, the pace not a factor until the closing laps. Farah moved to the front with two laps remaining and adopted the same policy as he had in the longer race a week earlier, gradually winding the pace up. One contender after another tried to pass Farah along the back straight and rounding the final bend, but the 10,000m gold-medallist would not give way. With 50 metres to go, Ethiopia's Dejen Gebrmeskel loomed up, but, to delight of the vast British crowd, the driven Farah would not be caught.

→ *Farah acknowledges the crowd after his stunning run to win the men's 5000m at the London 2012 Games.*

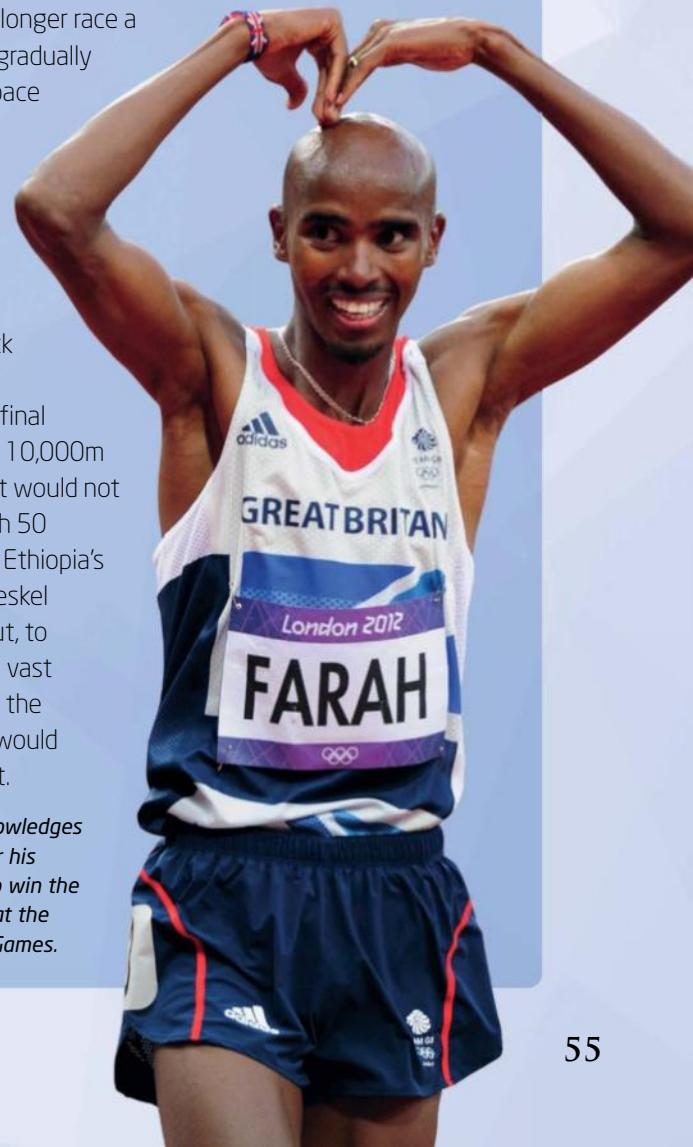
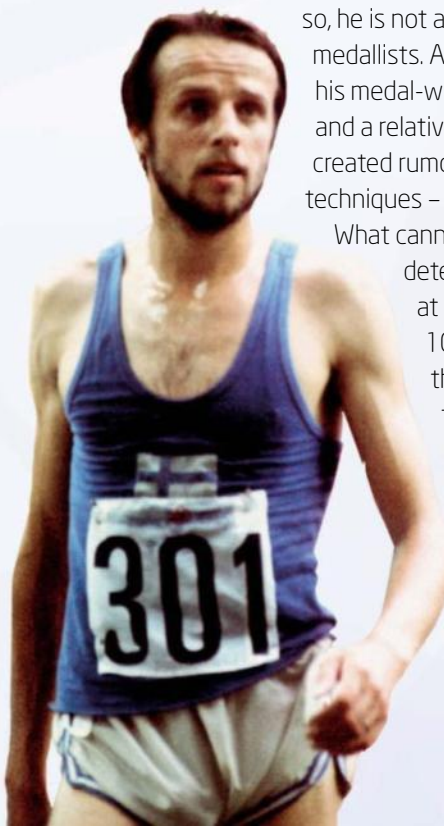
## LASSE BRINGS IT HOME

The enigmatic Finn Lasse Viren is the only man to retain the men's 5000m title at the Games and to achieve back-to-back 5000m-10,000m doubles (at the 1972 and 1976 Games). Even

so, he is not as revered as other multiple gold medallists. A failure to produce performances of his medal-winning standard outside the Games, and a relative paucity of races internationally, created rumours and suspicion of his training techniques – although nothing was ever proven.

What cannot be doubted, though, is his determination, as evidenced by his feat at Munich 1972, when he fell in the 10,000m final, losing 30 metres in the process, but recovered to win the race. Viren also finished fifth in the 1976 men's Marathon.

← *Finland's Lasse Viren is the only man in history to have completed the 5000m-10,000m double at two Games (at Munich 1972 and Montreal 1976).*











### GO MO! AND HE DID...

The distance races on the track at the Olympic Games had been annexed by Africa for 20 years when 29 men lined up for the 10,000m final on the middle Saturday of London 2012. Now, for the first time, there was a credible challenger from elsewhere, albeit with roots in Somalia – Mo Farah. Farah, who, with his family, had moved to Britain at the age of eight, made his move with four pursuers in tow with 500m to go. Union flags waved around the stadium and a deafening roar erupted from the 80,000 crowd as he surged clear. Farah was chased by the United States' Galen Rupp, but would not be denied as he won with a final lap of 53.48 seconds. A week later, he went on to win the 5000m.

◀ *Mo Farah leads the Men's 5000m final at London 2012.*



# MEN'S DECATHLON AND STEEPLECHASE

The Decathlon consists of ten track-and-field events and (with the exception of London 1908) has been part of the Olympic programme since 1904. The men's 3000m Steeplechase is an obstacle race run over seven-and-a-half laps, with each circuit involving four 0.914-metre-high hurdles and a water jump. It has been contested at every Games since 1920.

## DALEY SEES OFF TEUTONIC TITANS TO WIN GOLD

Arguably the most competitive Decathlon in history took place at Los Angeles 1984. It was billed as 'Daley versus the Germans', and with good cause as defending champion Daley Thompson was given a stern test by Jurgen Hingsen (the man who had taken the world record off him), Guido Kratschmer (another previous record holder), and Siggy Wentz. World-class performances from Thompson in the opening two events (the 100m and the long jump) laid down a marker, and Hingsen was unable to catch him; Wentz came third; and Kratschmer fourth. Thompson's tally of 8,798 points was recalculated as a world record a year later.



## KENYANS AT A CANTER

Since 1968 the dominant force in the men's 3000m Steeplechase has been the East African state of Kenya. Other than the boycott years of 1976 and 1980, a Kenyan has won the title at every Olympic Games since Mexico City, often closely pursued by his team-mates. It was 1968 champion Amos Biwott who first showed the world at large the now-familiar leaping style of clearing the barriers, rather than the accepted one foot on, step off technique.

← Amos Biwott's victory in the men's 3000m Steeplechase at Mexico City 1968 sparked a run of ten gold medals (out of 12) for Kenya in the event, a run that continued in 2012.



↑ Great Britain's Chris Brasher (226) leads the way in the men's 3000m Steeplechase final at the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne.

## BRASHER BACKED BY RIVALS

London Marathon founder Chris Brasher claimed the spoils in the men's 3000m Steeplechase at Melbourne 1956 thanks to backing from his rivals after he was initially disqualified. The Briton had eased his way through on the inside on the final lap, nudging Norwegian Ernst Larsen in the process. The judges took a dim view, but Larsen and others protested that Brasher would have won anyway and he was reinstated as the race winner.

## STEEPLECHASE BARRIERS BROKEN

A world record for the men's 3,000m Steeplechase was not officially recognised by the athletics authorities until the mid-1950s, owing to a number of inaccuracies across different runs with course distances and obstacles. Notable barriers broken through were 8:30, by Belgian legend Gaston Roelants in 1963; and 8:00 (the men's 3000m Steeplechase equivalent of the four-minute mile), by Kenya's Moses Kiptanui in 1995.

## YOUNG MASTER MATHIAS

Bob Mathias is the youngest-ever Athletics gold medallist. At the London Games in 1948 he claimed Decathlon gold at the age of just 17, and four years later, in Helsinki, he followed this up with another first by retaining the title.

## A COLD WAR HERO

Horace Ashenfelter, the men's 3000m Steeplechase champion at Helsinki 1952, not only won a gold medal on the track but was viewed as a propaganda weapon by the Americans. In the early years of the Cold War, the sight of Ashenfelter (who was an FBI agent at the time) chasing down Soviet star Vladimir Kazantsev was like gold dust for the PR men.





↑ Ezekiel Kemboi rolled back the years to win a second gold medal in 2012, eight years after his first.

## LEADERS OF THE PACK

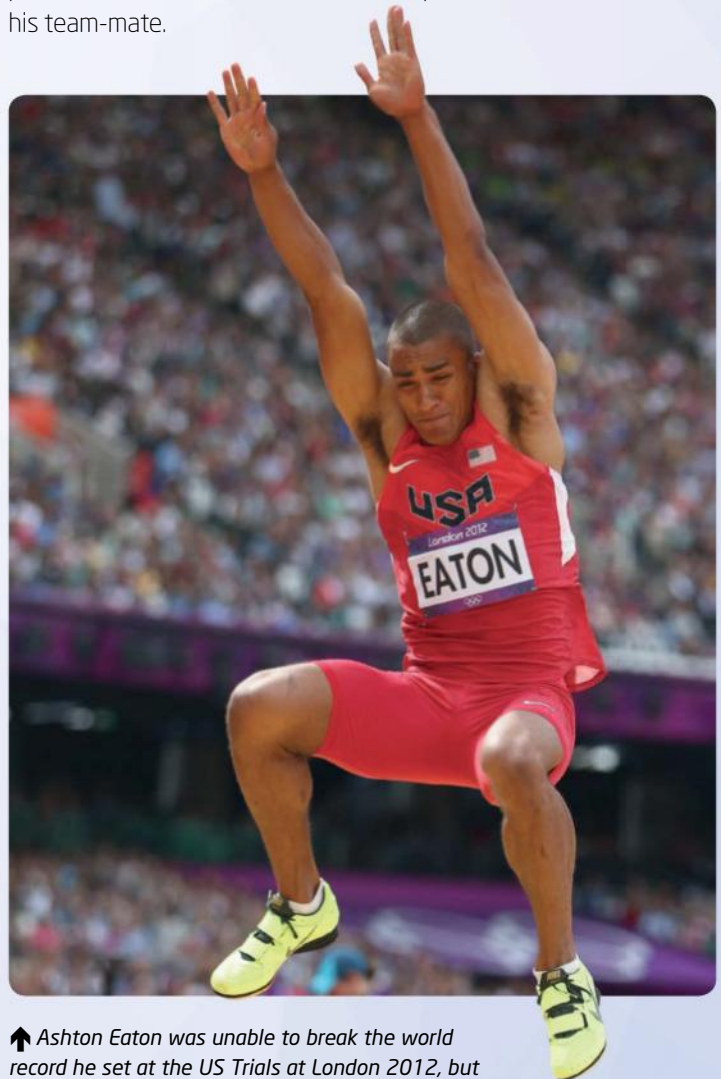
When it comes to one of the most physically demanding events in Athletics, the Steeplechase, it has been a quadrennial procession for Kenya at the Olympic Games. At London 2012, the man anointed to be the leader of the pack was Ezekiel Kemboi, the 2004 Olympic champion and winner of the past two World Championships. With a lap to go Kemboi was joined by Kenyan team-mate Abel Mutai in the lead, but Mutai was unable to live with the nagging pace and Kemboi pulled clear on what was to be his glorious victory lap to regain the title he had ceded in 2008. A Kenyan had won the Steeplechase for the eighth Olympic Games in a row.

## THORPE – GIANT OF THE DECATHLON

The legend of Jim Thorpe dominates the history of the Decathlon. The man with a Native American-Irish family background utterly dominated the competition at the 1912 Games in Stockholm, his superiority so absolute that King Gustav of Sweden allegedly told Thorpe to his face that he was 'the greatest athlete in the world'. The phrase has stuck for the winner of the ten-discipline marathon event ever since, but rarely has it been as appropriate. A year later, stories circulated that Thorpe had been paid to play baseball shortly before his Games triumph, contrary to the IOC rules of the time. He was disqualified and died in 1953 with his name still scratched from the record books. In 1982, he was reinstated posthumously as a gold medallist.

## EATON ALL THE WAY

Ashton Eaton arrived in London as the new Decathlon world record holder. The man from Oregon had set the new mark of 9,039 points in winning the US Trials in front of a home state crowd in Eugene. The triumph gave him a huge psychological victory over the man who had defeated him in the 2011 World Championships in Daegu, Trey Hardee. The London 2012 Olympic Games gold medal would surely be a battle between the two Americans who had taken up the mantle of Jim Thorpe, Bruce Jenner and Dan O'Brien in this classic event. Eaton dominated from the off. His 10.35 seconds in the 100m was the fastest time ever recorded by a decathlete in that discipline. He came top in the long jump with a 8.03m leap, achieved a solid 14.66m in the shot put, tied second in the high jump with 2.05m and finished day one with the top time in the 400m of 46.90 – a full second faster than anybody else. Day two began with a time of 213.56, but a narrow defeat by Hardee, in the 110m hurdles. A 42.53m throw in the discus further reduced his lead, but it was restored when he recorded the third-best height in the pole vault (5.20m). Eaton finished with a personal best throw of 61.96m in the javelin and a 150-point lead over Hardee. A time of 4.33.59 in the 1500m was almost a victory parade for Eaton, who ended on 8,869 points – 198 clear of his team-mate.



↑ Ashton Eaton was unable to break the world record he set at the US Trials at London 2012, but he did lead an American one-two in the Decathlon.



# MEN'S 4 X 100M AND 4 X 400M RELAYS

Relays are the climax of the Athletics programme at the Games. The aim is for a team of four athletes to carry a baton over a distance of either 400 metres (4 x 100m) or 1600m (4 x 400m), with the baton passed between competitors at the end of each 100m or 400m stint. Both events have been contested since Stockholm 1912.

## WORLD RECORDS

The Usain Bolt-inspired Jamaica team in 2008 were only the second squad from outside the United States to hold the men's 4 x 100m Relay world record since 1968. Nesta Carter, Michael Frater, Bolt and Asafa Powell scorched around the Beijing track in 37.10 seconds to break the long-standing mark of 37.40 set by the USA's Olympic Games- and World Championship-winning quartets of 1992 and 1993. There have been a few twists and turns of the world record for the men's 4 x 400m Relay, but the one constant since 1960 is that a United States team has held it. In fact, a team from Jamaica in 1952 are the only non-USA side ever to hold the mark. It took 24 years for the altitude-enhanced first sub-three-minute time in the men's 4 x 400m, 2:56.16, set in Mexico City in 1968, to be bettered.

## "THE WORLD RECORD SHATTERED FOUR TIMES IN TWO DAYS"



## BLAZING BATONS IN PARIS

The men's 4 x 100m Relay competition at the 1924 Games in Paris was about far more than just the final. This meet was the biggest step forward for the discipline. A bewildering set of races saw the old world record shattered four times inside two days. Harold Abrahams inspired Great Britain to clock 42 seconds dead in the first heat, and this was equalled by the Netherlands in the third. In the sixth race, USA improved their old best time by a whole second – an astonishing margin for this event – and in the semis the Americans took it down to 41.0. Spare a thought for the Swiss team... They equalled the old record in each of their first two races, but were disqualified in the final.

↑ *Harold Abrahams (number 419, winning gold in the 100m individual event) was part of Britain's silver medal-winning quartet in the 4 x 100m Relay at Paris 1924.*



## AMERICANS FORCED TO WAIT

Wembley Stadium in 1948 was the scene of the most long-winded Victory Ceremony in history, and probably the first instance of a decision aided by video. The USA men's 4 x 100m team won their event, but were initially disqualified for a faulty exchange. On reviewing film of the race, officials decide to reverse the disqualification. However, the final decision did not become official for three days.

↑ *Avery Brundage (centre), President of the US Olympic Committee, talks to the disqualified US quartet at the 1948 Games. They were later awarded the gold medal.*

## THE BEST TESTED

Relay running is a team game, but talented individuals are required to make up a quartet good enough to claim gold. In 1924, Great Britain's men's 4 x 400m team was denied the services of the men's 400m champion, Eric Liddell, a religious man, because the final fell on a Sunday. Britain came third. In 1936, the United States curiously chose to leave out both the men's 400m gold and bronze medallists, Archie Williams and Jimmy LuValle, and were beaten by Great Britain. In 1948, Jamaica were favoured to win with newly crowned men's 400m champion Arthur Wint in their ranks. On the third leg Wint set out in pursuit of the Americans, but pulled a muscle, dashing Jamaican hopes in the process.



## BOLT'S DOUBLE TREBLE

The men's sprint relay was selected as the event to bring the track and field activity at the London 2012 Olympic Games to a close. It was an inspired choice, bringing a sensational meet to a rousing finish. Usain Bolt was aiming to bring the Jamaican baton home first to seal a so-called 'double-treble', having won the 100m, 200m and 4 x 100m Relay at Beijing 2008, and he stood on the brink of replicating that feat in London. But it was not a foregone conclusion, because the United States fielded a superb quartet, including former Olympic 100m champion Justin Gatlin and Tyson Gay, the second fastest man in history. Bolt received the baton with a fractional advantage over US anchor-leg runner Ryan Bailey, less than 10 seconds later it was metres rather than fractions as he flew across the line, stopping the clock in a remarkable world-record time of 36.84.

➔ *Usain Bolt powers Jamaica to 4 x 100m Relay gold at London 2012.*



## RIGHT ROMAN BATTLE

The men's 4 x 100m Relay final at Rome 1960 was one of the most dramatic races in the history of the Games. The USA and Germany quartets had an epic duel, with the lead changing hands four times owing to a combination of the Americans' superior foot speed and the Germans' more efficient baton changes. In the end, technique won against raw talent as race winners USA were eliminated for an illegal hand-over.

## GONE IN A HAYES...

At the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo anchor runner Bob Hayes ran arguably the fastest men's 4 x 100m Relay leg ever seen. Hayes's charge saw him blaze back from fifth place to claim the gold medal for the United States in a world record-breaking time of 39.0 seconds. Hayes' final leg time is estimated to be somewhere between 8.5 and 8.9.

## MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

The men's 4 x 400m Relay at Antwerp 1920 was one of the most bizarre events in the Games' history. Only six nations entered teams. A straight final? No. The organisers decided to run two semi-finals with three teams each in order to ascertain ... six finalists. The teams went through the motions to 'qualify' in pedestrian times – in what was a pointless exercise.

## BREEZE FOR BAHAMAS

The beneficiaries of the weakness of the United States in the 4 x 400m Relay at London 2012 were the Bahamas, who joyfully celebrated a first-ever male Athletics gold medal. Chris Brown put them in the lead on the first leg and Demetrius Pinder consolidated the advantage on the second leg. When Tony McQuay of the United States passed Michael Mathieu on the penultimate circuit, it appeared that normal service would be resumed. Ramon Miller had to make up a three-metre deficit and overtake the experienced Angelo Taylor. Miller expertly paced his effort, drafting Taylor round the final turn and having enough in the tank to take the Bahamians to gold in a national record time of 2:56.72.

⬅ *The men's 4 x 400m Relay had surprise gold medallists in the Bahamas.*





# MEN'S MARATHON

Named after the legend of Pheidippides, who ran non-stop from the battlefield at Marathon to Athens to announce his army's victory over the Persians, only to drop dead having delivered the news, the Marathon is a road race run over 26 miles 385 yards (42.195 kilometres) that has been contested at every Games.



↑ Ethiopia's Abebe Bikila, running barefoot, won the men's Marathon at Rome 1960 to become the first black African gold medallist in history.

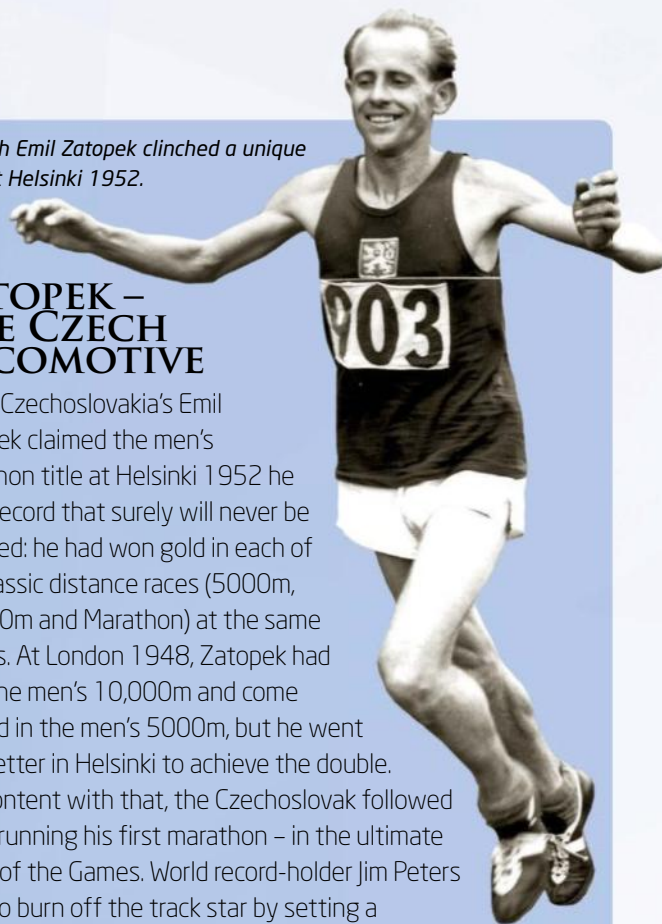
## BIKILA BREAKS THE MOULD

When runners lined up for the men's Marathon at Rome 1960, almost no one outside his own country had heard of 28-year-old Ethiopian Abebe Bikila. He had been drafted into his country's team at the last moment after Wami Biratu broke his ankle playing football. By the end of the race, he had claimed the first gold medal won by a black African in the Games' history – in bare feet, and in a world record time of 2:15.16. Four years later, he contracted appendicitis just six weeks before the Tokyo Games, but jogged around the hospital to maintain his fitness. This was his first marathon in shoes, and he won in another record time (2:12.11), over four minutes clear of Britain's silver medallist Basil Heatley. In 1968, Bikila went to Mexico City attempting to clinch a hat-trick of gold medals. He kept a foot injury secret, but the pain was too much and he dropped out just short of half-way. In 1969, Bikila was involved in a car accident, which left him paralysed and he died four years later from a brain haemorrhage. His funeral was attended by 75,000 people and Emperor Haile Selassie proclaimed a national day of mourning. A stadium in Kenya's capital, Addis Adaba, is named in his honour.

➔ Czech Emil Zatopek clinched a unique treble at Helsinki 1952.

## ZATPEK – THE CZECH LOCOMOTIVE

When Czechoslovakia's Emil Zatopek claimed the men's Marathon title at Helsinki 1952 he set a record that surely will never be equalled: he had won gold in each of the classic distance races (5000m, 10,000m and Marathon) at the same Games. At London 1948, Zatopek had won the men's 10,000m and come second in the men's 5000m, but he went one better in Helsinki to achieve the double. Not content with that, the Czechoslovak followed up by running his first marathon – in the ultimate arena of the Games. World record-holder Jim Peters tried to burn off the track star by setting a scorching pace, but Zatopek stuck tenaciously to the Briton before going clear soon after the 15-kilometre mark and winning easily – and breaking the Games record in the process. Zatopek attempted to defend the men's Marathon title at Melbourne 1956, but a groin injury badly disrupted his training and he trailed in sixth.



## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF PHEIDIPPIDES

The first Marathon of the modern Olympic Games, held in Athens in 1896, saw 17 runners trace the route of Pheidippides, the ancient Greek who, in 490 BC, it is claimed, ran from the battle of Marathon to Athens (approximately 40 kilometres) as a messenger to proclaim the victory of the Athenians over the Persians. Legend has it that he collapsed and died after delivering the news. In 1896, only nine runners completed the 40km race, and the winner was a local man, Spyridon Louis.

## MARATHON THAT NEVER WAS?

Hannes Kolehmainen, the first in a succession of great Finnish distance runners, surged to victory in the men's Marathon at Antwerp 1920 – but was it a 'marathon'? The official report from the Games states that the course was 42.75 kilometres, approximately 400 metres further than the classic distance. However, the Association of Road Racing Statisticians have estimated that the route was only 40km long, which casts doubt on whether Kolehmainen actually smashed the 'world best' by more than three-and-a-half minutes, as is claimed in many record books.





↑ *Italy's Dorando Pietri crosses the line to win men's Marathon gold at London 1908 ... or so he thought: Pietri was later disqualified for having been helped to his feet by his manager while in a state of collapse during the race.*

## PIETRI'S PLACE IN HISTORY

It was the London 1908 Olympic Games that provided the Marathon, previously run over 26 miles, with its idiosyncratic extra 385 yards. A lap of the track at the Olympic Stadium was included in addition to the 26-mile course, so that the finish could take place in front of the royal box. If it wasn't for this, Italian Dorando Pietri would surely have won; as it is, he gained greater fame as the most gallant of losers. Pietri initially went the wrong way round the track and then proceeded to stagger to the finish line, falling to the ground with exhaustion several times. Officials helped him to his feet each time, but their actions cost Pietri the gold medal. American Johnny Hayes (who finished second) was later deemed to be the winner after the Italian was disqualified for accepting assistance.

## AMERICANS SET THE WORLD PACE

The first Marathon race over the now-accepted distance of 42.195 kilometres (26 miles 385 yards) was staged at London 1908. American gold medallist Johnny Hayes set the standard with his world record time, but only six months passed before his effort was chalked off by compatriot Robert Fowler. The first sub-2:30 Marathon was recorded by yet another American, Albert Michelsen, in 1925, but Haile Gebrselassie's epic effort in the Berlin Marathon in 2008 (2:03.59) has lowered the mark by almost 20 per cent since Michelsen's performance to the brink of the magical two hours – a barrier generally considered as unbreakable. No athlete has broken the world record as many times as Britain's Jim Peters (four).

## UGANDAN SPRINGS MARATHON SURPRISE

The East African nation of Uganda has a limited athletics heritage, one that is dwarfed by neighbouring Kenya. The 400m Hurdles at Munich 1972 was the only Olympic gold ever brought back to Kampala, until Stephen Kiprotich's glory run through the streets of London in 2012. Kenya's Wilson Kipsang Kiprotich, no relation to Stephen, came into the race as the fastest man, the leader of a three-man team selected from an amazing 248 Kenyans who had achieved qualifying standard.

Kipsang Kiprotich made the early pace, going through halfway at 1:03.15, 16 seconds clear of the chasing pack. At the Tower of London, the 23-kilometre point on the second of three laps, past a string of famous landmarks, Kipsang Kiprotich was pursued by his team-mate, world champion Abel Kirui, Stephen Kiprotich and Ethiopian Ayele Abshero. Three kilometres later, with an estimated one million spectators lining the streets and producing an unprecedented level of support and atmosphere, Kirui and Stephen Kiprotich joined Wilson Kipsang Kiprotich.

On the final lap, at around the 36-kilometre mark, the two Kenyans made a what appeared to be a successful bid to drop the Ugandan, but, in an extraordinary twist, Stephen Kiprotich surged like a 1500m runner at the 35km marker, catching the Kenyan duo, overtaking them and, in the space of a kilometre, establishing a 20-metre lead.

Frequent glances over his shoulder as he ran alongside the River Thames told him that the gold was in the bag. The sight of Big Ben was welcoming in the 26-degree heat and Stephen Kiprotich could enjoy a solo cruise up The Mall to finish in 2:08.01 with the Kenyans finishing in the minor medal positions.

↓ *An African men's Marathon 1-2-3 was no surprise, but the gold medal for Uganda's Stephen Kiprotich at London 2012 was a shock.*





# MEN'S HIGH JUMP AND POLE VAULT

The men's High Jump and Pole Vault are two of 12 track-and-field events to have formed a part of the Athletics programme at every Games since Athens 1896. Both disciplines have benefitted enormously from significant advances in technique and technology over the years.



## OSBORN'S DOUBLE SPECIAL

American Harold Osborn is the only athlete to have won an individual event in the Olympic Games as well as the men's Decathlon, having achieved the feat at Paris 1924. A doctor of osteopathy, he was a leading high jumper from 1920 through to 1936. He mastered the trick of pressing the bar back towards the uprights as he passed over them, a practice that was subsequently not permitted.

↑ *Harold Osborne (United States) took men's High Jump gold at Paris 1924 - ahead of compatriot Leroy Browne - with a leap of 1m98.*

## POLES APART

The Pole Vault at Munich 1972 was marred by controversy over the use of a new type of pole, the Cata-pole. East Germany's Wolfgang Nordwig beat the American world record holder Robert Seagren. It was the first time a non-US athlete had won the event.

## TALKING THE TALK, WALKING THE WALK

Canadian Duncan McNaughton was a student at the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles, the venue for the 1932 Games. However, Canada refused to include him in their team and it was only when he pestered officials that they finally succumbed. It was just as well. In the final jump-off, McNaughton faced his university team-mate Robert Van Osdel, who also trained under coach Dean Cromwell. McNaughton cleared the crucial height to take the gold, while Van Osdel secured silver.

## BEAU BRUMEL...

Ukrainian Valery Brumel and American John Thomas were friends, despite the political differences between their countries. However, both missed out on the men's High Jump title at Rome 1960 when another Soviet jumper, Robert Shavlakadze from Georgia, finished ahead of them. Then began a series of duels between the pair, in which Brumel was usually victorious. So it proved at Tokyo 1964, with Brumel winning on countback. However, a year later, Brumel was severely injured in a motorcycle accident, breaking his right leg, and subsequently underwent about 20 operations. He cherished a well-wishing telegram from Thomas, who hoped that the Ukrainian would jump again. He did, even managing to clear 2.12 metres, but he never competed at an elite level again.

## RECORD-BREAKER BUBKA

Sergey Bubka is the greatest-ever pole-vaulter. He won six world titles and set 17 ratified world outdoor records, including the current 6.14 metres. Bubka, however, collected only one Olympic Games gold medal, at Seoul 1988, and he needed three attempts at the winning height of 5.90m. He did not register a height at Barcelona 1992, and was injured in the warm-up at Atlanta 1996.

## ANYTHING BUT A FLOP...

The 'Fosbury Flop' transformed the technique of the high jump. Developed by American Dick Fosbury, it involved clearing the bar backwards and landing head first on the inflated cushion. Disappointed by his results with the conventional straddle, Fosbury gradually evolved the 'Flop', and it was revealed to an international audience for the first time in Mexico City at the 1968 Games, when he cleared 2.24 metres on his final attempt to defeat his compatriot Edward Caruthers and take the gold medal. Subsequently Fosbury suffered a series of injuries, but he still won the US national collegiate title the following year. Within three years most leading jumpers had adopted his style.

↓ *The revolutionary technique that took Dick Fosbury (United States) to High Jump gold in 1968 was soon adopted by most leading high jumpers.*





## WHERE'S MY SHIRT?

The Olympic Games High Jump final is a high-stakes environment, but London 2012 gold medallist Ivan Ukhov unwittingly introduced an element of farce into the event as he prepared for an attempt at 2.33 metres. The Russian Federation jumper was seen scrambling around the floor and hurriedly rooting through his kit bag, having mislaid his competitor's vest. In desperation, he grabbed a T-shirt, pinned his number to it and rushed out with seconds to spare. He rose majestically above the bar with the unconventional attire flapping in the wind and went back to continue the search for the shirt. Having been reunited with his vest, Ukhov cleared 2.36 and 2.38 metres to clinch gold.

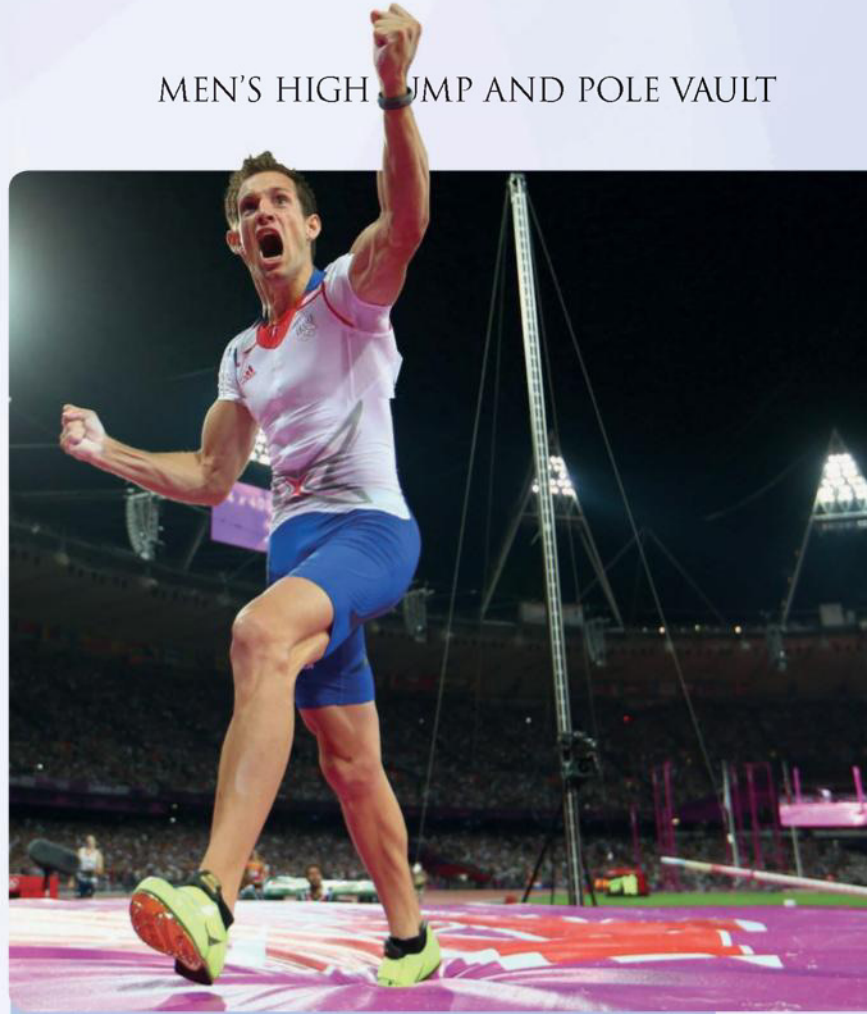


↑ Ivan Ukhov cleared a height of 2.33 metres despite wearing a loose-fitting T-shirt.

## "HOOKER BECAME THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN MALE IN 40 YEARS TO SECURE AN ATHLETICS GOLD MEDAL"

### HOOKER LEAPS TO GOLD

Born on 16 July 1982, Australian pole-vaulter Steve Hooker came from athletic stock. His mother, Erica, was a 1972 Olympian and a silver medallist in the women's Long Jump at the 1978 Commonwealth Games, and his father, Bill, represented Australia at the 1974 Commonwealth Games. Hooker first came to prominence at the 2006 Commonwealth Games in his hometown Melbourne, when he set a new Games record (5.80 metres) to take gold. He went even better at Beijing 2008, leaping 5.96m to break Tim Mack's Olympic Games record (5.95m set in 2004) to become the first Australian male in 40 years to secure an Athletics gold medal since Ralph Doubell won the 800m at Mexico City 1968.



↑ Renaud Lavillenie added Olympic Games gold to his European title.

## SCALING THE HEIGHTS

The Pole Vault event is a compelling spectacle. The combination of speed, skill and nerve intrigues spectators of all kinds. The London 2012 final was a slow burner, with only three vaulters clearing 5.75 metres. One of these was France's Renaud Lavillenie, the pre-event favourite, thanks to a 5.97-metre effort in Helsinki in July 2012. His first failure came at 5.91 metres, by which time he was assured of a medal, along with Germans Bjorn Otto and Raphael Holzdeppe. Lavillenie elected to go to an Olympic record height, 5.97 metres, and was the only man to succeed, becoming the third French Pole Vault gold medallist, after Pierre Quinon and Jean Galfione. Six metres is pole vaulting's magical height, and Lavillenie tried to gild the lily by clearing 6.02 and 6.07, but he failed with three tries at those heights.

## HEAVENLY TWINS

One of the most entrancing sequences in Leni Riefenstahl's film of the 1936 Olympic Games was the Pole Vault final, when Americans Earle Meadows and Bill Sefton, nicknamed 'The Heavenly Twins', from the University of Southern California, faced the Japanese duo Shuhei Nishida and Sueo Oe. Meadows won, and the Japanese declined to jump off against each other, choosing to settle the places by lot, which left Nishida second and Oe third. When they returned to Japan, they had their medals cut in two and soldered together, so they both had medals that were half silver and half bronze.



# MEN'S LONG JUMP AND TRIPLE JUMP

The men's Long Jump and Triple Jump rely on an athlete's strength and speed. The former consists of a run-up followed by a single leap; the latter, a run-up followed by a 'hop, skip and jump leap'.

## HUBBARD'S BREAKTHROUGH

William DeHart Hubbard was the first black athlete to win an individual gold medal at the Games, when he captured the Long Jump title in Paris in 1924. Remarkably, his winning distance of 7.44m was less than that of another American, Robert LeGendre, who had reached 7.76m when coming third in the Pentathlon the previous day.

## HOW LEWIS EMULATED OWENS

Carl Lewis saw himself as Jesse Owens' successor, and at Los Angeles 1984 he won the same four gold medals as Owens had done in 1936 – the 100m, 200m, 4 x 100m Relay and Long Jump. But Lewis outdid Owens by winning gold in the same event, the Long Jump, at four consecutive Olympic Games. His narrowest victory was in 1992, when fellow American Mike Powell – who had broken Bob Beamon's world record with a leap of 8.96 metres in winning the 1991 World Championships – came within 3 centimetres of him. Lewis won again at Atlanta 1996, after which he retired from the sport.



## IMMORTAL JESSE OWENS

Jesse Owens, one of the most celebrated names in international athletics, set a world long jump record of 8.13 metres, a mark which lasted for more than 25 years. It was one of a total of six world records (both metric and imperial) that he set within an hour on his 'day of days', 25 May 1935, at Ann Arbor, Michigan. Owens was clear favourite for the gold medal at the 1936 Games in Berlin the following year. However, the American's first two attempts were no jumps. Then Germany's Luz Long suggested he take off well behind the board to ensure qualification. Owens followed his advice ... and qualified by one centimetre. That afternoon, Long equalled Owens' best effort with a leap of 7.87m in the fifth round. However, Owens responded with two longer jumps, winning the title with 8.06m, and was congratulated by the German. The pair became friends, and although Long was killed in the war, Owens continued to maintain contact with his family until his own death in 1980.

↑ *Germany's Luz Long (left) and Jesse Owens pose for the camera at the 1936 Games in Berlin. Owens beat the German to take Long Jump gold.*

## BEAMON THE DESTROYER

The most publicised moment in long jump history occurred early in the morning of 18 October 1968, when Bob Beamon, an unheralded American, leapt 8.90m to improve the world record by a massive 55 centimetres, a performance that still resonates nearly half a century later. Although he was aided by the fact that those Olympic Games were held at altitude, thus reducing the air resistance, and the fact that the wind advantage was a maximum 2m per second, it was still an extraordinary feat and a record that stood for 23 years. Beamon's first-round effort completely demoralised the rest of the field, with Britain's Lynn Davies, the defending champion, saying: 'You have destroyed this event.' Beamon was so overcome by the experience that he had a cataplectic fit and did not jump again in Mexico City, and in subsequent competitions never jumped further than 8.21m. Still, his athletic immortality was assured. His autobiography was entitled *The Man Who Could Fly*.

↪ *Bob Beamon leaps to the gold medal and immortality with his world record-breaking jump at the 1968 Games in Mexico City.*



## GREG THE GREAT

Great Britain had not won the men's long jump title in any major global meeting since Lynn Davies struck gold at Tokyo 1964. Even with home advantage, there was no reason to assume that sequence would be broken at London 2012. Team GB had two men in the final and although neither was considered gold-medal material, something was in the London air on the evening of 8 August. Sandwiched between victories for Jessica Ennis and Mo Farah, the unheralded Greg Rutherford leapt 8.21 metres to take the lead in the second round. Two jumps later, Rutherford extended his leading mark by 10 centimetres amid hysteria around the stadium. It was by no means an unreachable target, but jumper after jumper failed to exceed it and Rutherford was left as one of the more surprising gold-medal winners.

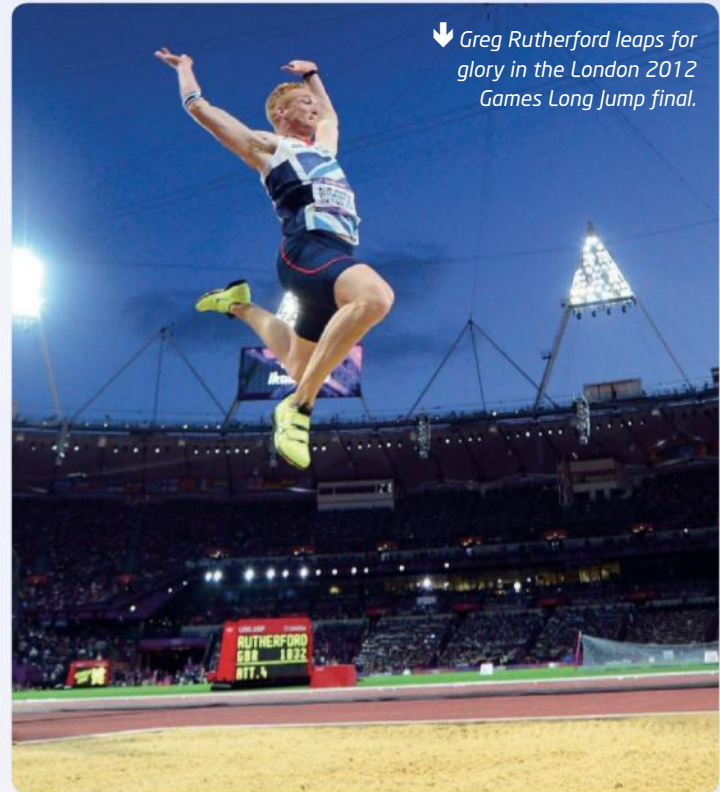
## "SOMETHING WAS IN THE LONDON AIR ON THE EVENING OF 8 AUGUST"



↑ Christian Taylor leapt a season's best 17.81 metres to win the Triple Jump crown.

## LEAVING IT LATE

Christian Taylor was in a personal crisis approaching the middle of the London 2012 Triple Jump final. The American world champion had overstepped in each of his first two attempts and needed to make a line in the sand in order to go any further in the competition. He sprinted down the runway, planted his foot 50cm behind the plasticine – first task completed. A hop, a step, and a leap later, he landed 17.15 metres away, more than enough to remain for the final three rounds. As he prepared for his fourth jump, he was 39 centimetres off his target, but this is when he finally found his form. Taylor strung together the sequence of the night, out to 17.81 metres.



↓ Greg Rutherford leaps for glory in the London 2012 Games Long Jump final.

## EDWARDS'S LONG WAIT

Britain's Jonathan Edwards was favourite to win men's Triple Jump gold at Atlanta 1996. The previous year, he had broken the world record three times, finally reaching 18.29 metres to become world champion in Gothenburg. In Atlanta, however, he came up against American Kenny Harrison, who had only been permitted to compete because the International Association of Athletic Federations allowed a distance recorded indoors rather than outdoors (as was the usual practice) to serve as a qualifying mark. Harrison beat Edwards to gold by 21 cm with a leap of 18.09 metres – a lifetime best. Four years later, at Sydney 2000, Edwards, again the favourite, finally fulfilled his Olympic dream, finishing well clear of the field. Edwards's successor was Swede Christian Olsson, who had won the world outdoor and indoor titles before taking gold at Athens 2004 with a jump of 17.79m. Olsson's career was later beset by a series of injuries.

## VICTOR VIKTOR...

Of all triple jumpers, none was more consistently impressive in major events than the Soviet Union's Viktor Saneyev. He set a world record of 17.39 metres in winning gold at Mexico City 1968, retained his crown in 1972 with the third best mark of all time (17.35m), and then won his third gold medal in the event by coming through in the fifth round to snatch victory in 1976. Only in Moscow in 1980, with the Soviet crowd jeering the foreign competitors, did Saneyev lose a final at the Games, although he did win the silver medal with his last attempt, falling 11 centimetres short of his compatriot Jaak Uudmae.



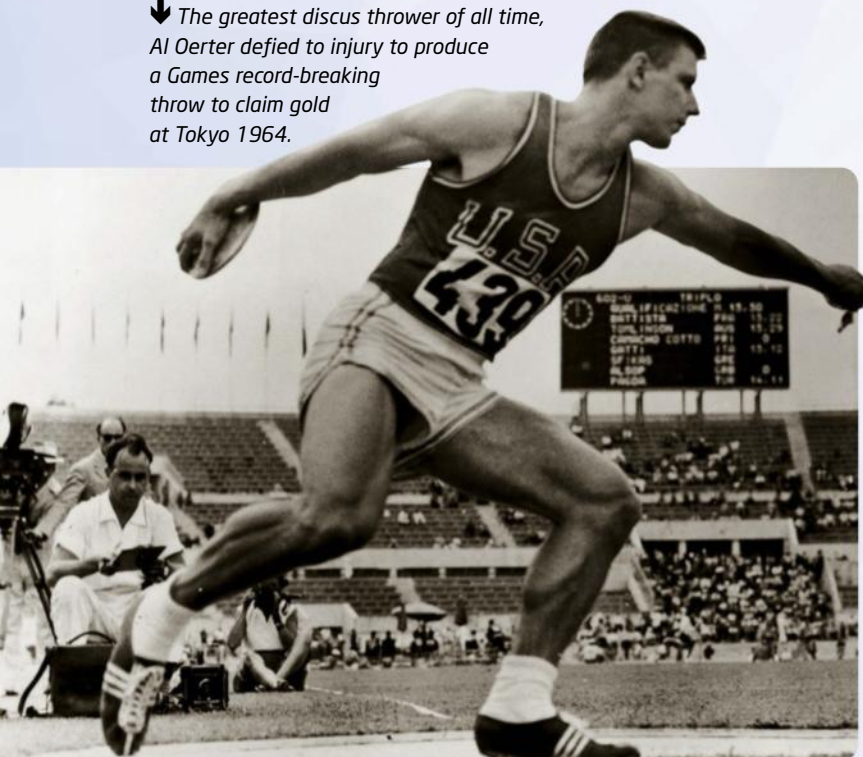
# MEN'S DISCUS AND HAMMER

The object of both the men's Discus Throw (contested at every Games since 1896) and Hammer Throw (part of the Olympic programme since 1900) is to throw the object further than the rest of the competitors in the field. The former is a 2kg metal disc; the latter is a 7.257kg ball attached to a 1.215m chain.

## OERTER THE EXPERT

In all of the four throwing events the greatest competitor in the history of the Games is Al Oerter, who won four successive gold medals and on each occasion defeated the world record holder at the time. He said: 'I beat inexperience in 1956, public expectancy in 1960, injury in 1964 and old age in 1968.' His greatest victory came at Tokyo 1964, when he was suffering from disc problems in his back that forced him to wear a surgical collar, and then damaged his ribcage while practising. However, he was determined to compete, was given pain-killing injections and, although trailing, reached the fifth round, at which point he took off the collar, uttering the words: 'These are the Olympics, you die for them.' He then set a new Games record of 61.00 metres. In 1980, aged 43, he even took part in the US Trials – after the boycott of the Games had been announced – and finished fourth. If following the Trials the leading three Americans had gone to the Games, then at least one of them might have buckled under pressure and Oerter would have been on the team yet again.

↓ *The greatest discus thrower of all time, Al Oerter defied to injury to produce a Games record-breaking throw to claim gold at Tokyo 1964.*



## CHAMPAGNE GOES FLAT

The 1932 Games were held in Los Angeles at the height of Prohibition, so the French team brought its own supply of wine. During the men's Discus Throw event, Jules Noël used to leave the field after each of his efforts to have some champagne with fellow Frenchmen in the changing rooms. This seemed to inspire Noël and his fourth throw landed beyond the mark of the eventual gold medallist John Anderson. However, the attention of the officials was centred on the men's Pole Vault competition and they missed where the discus had landed. Noël was therefore awarded a further attempt, but he was unable to duplicate the effort and eventually finished fourth.



## SHERIDAN'S BEAT

Like several pioneers in the hammer, Martin Sheridan was born in Ireland but emigrated to the United States and became a New York policeman. He won his first men's Discus title at St Louis 1904, defeating Ralph Rose, the Shot Put champion, after both athletes were allowed extra attempts. He then took men's Discus Throw gold at the 1906 Intercalated Games in Athens, as well as the Shot Put gold and three silver medals in other events, before winning a third men's Discus Throw title in London in 1908. Sadly, he died of pneumonia in 1918.

↑ *An Irish-born New York policeman, Martin Sheridan won men's Discus gold for the United States at St Louis 1904 and London 1908.*

## HAL THE HAMMER

American hammer thrower Hal Connolly attracted international attention through his romance with Czech discus champion Olga Fikotova. Their relationship began at Melbourne 1956, when the Cold War was at its most intense. The pair returned to their own countries after the Games, both as gold medallists, but in 1957, Connolly went to Prague and was allowed to marry Fikotova and take her back to America. However, they divorced in 1973.



## PARS PERFECTION

Until London 2012, Hungary's Krisztian Pars had been the nearly man of the Hammer Throw. He finished fourth at Beijing 2008, but was briefly elevated to silver after two athletes who had finished ahead of him were disqualified. They appealed and were reinstated, so Pars had the precious medal wrenched from his grasp. In Daegu, South Korea, at the 2011 World Championships, Pars at last earned a podium finish, winning silver. He went one better at the 2012 European Championship. At London 2012, he achieved the minimum required to qualify, but the final would surely require an 80-metre heave of the implement. In round three Pars propelled the hammer to 80.59 metres. After eight major championships with no gold medals, he had won two in succession, including the biggest of the lot.

➔ *Krisztian Pars of Hungary won gold in the Hammer Throw in 2012.*



↑ *Robert Harting celebrates men's Discus gold at London 2012.*

## OVERCOMING EVERY HURDLE

Robert Harting proved himself an unconventional discus thrower – at least when it came to celebrating. The German left it late to become a gold medallist at London 2012. His throw of 68.27 metres in the fifth round earned him the Olympic crown by nine centimetres. When his victory was confirmed, Harting set off on an impressive sprint, which surprised the ranks of the photographers, but that was not where it ended. As he proceeded down the home straight on a lap of honour, Harting elected to take on the barriers set up for the women's 100m Hurdles final, delighting the crowd as he showed impressive hurdling technique for a big man.

## SCHMIDT'S BORDER BREAK

Wolfgang Schmidt was unusual as an East German athlete because he rebelled against the State's control. He was second in the 1976 Games in Montreal and then, two years later, set a world discus record of 71.16 metres. However, following a fourth-place finish at the 1980 Games at Moscow and his failure to qualify for the East German squad for the 1981 World Championships, in 1982, he made plans to pursue his Athletics career in the West. The State Police discovered these plans and he was sentenced to one-and-a-half year's imprisonment. After his release from jail, he was eventually allowed to cross the 'Iron Curtain' in 1988 and, three years later, after the Berlin Wall had come down, achieved a fourth-place finish for a combined German team in the men's Discus Throw competition at the World Championships in Tokyo.

**"THE POLICE DISCOVERED SCHMIDT'S PLANS AND HE WAS SENTENCED TO ONE-AND-A-HALF YEAR'S IMPRISONMENT"**

## WHALE OF A GAMES

The early years of hammer throwing at the Olympic Games were dominated by a group of Americans of Irish extraction, who came to be known as the 'Irish Whales'. The first was John Flanagan, winner of three successive gold medals at the Games from 1900 to 1908. Flanagan's technique inspired both his contemporaries and successors, such as Pat 'Chicken' Ryan, born in County Limerick, winner of men's Hammer Throw gold in 1920, and Matt McGrath, born in Tipperary, who picked up a silver medal in 1908, a gold medal in 1912, a fifth-place finish in 1920, when injured, and a second silver in 1924. The trio were pioneers of the event and were well ahead of other international competitors, frequently setting world records.



# MEN'S SHOT PUT AND JAVELIN

Men's Shot Put competitions have been held at the Olympic Games since their inception in 1896 and use a 7.26kg shot. Men's Javelin Throw events (which have been staged at every Games since 1908) are used with spears measuring 2.6–2.7 metres in length and weighing 800g.

## ONE-WAY TRAFFIC

At 1.98 metres in height and weighing more than 120kg, American Ralph Rose was physically a forerunner of modern competitors, although he had a rudimentary technique and lacked the explosive speed of modern-day competitors. He took the men's Shot Put title in front of his home crowd at the 1904 Games in St Louis – with a world record of 14.81 metres – and retained his title in London four years later, when he was handed the honour of carrying the US flag at the Opening Ceremony. In the London final he defeated Irishman Denis Horgan, who in 1907 had nearly been killed in a brawl while working as a New York policeman. At Stockholm 1912, Rose lost his title to another New York policeman, Patrick McDonald, who was a point duty traffic officer in Times Square.

## THE ZELEZNY AND BACKLEY SHOW

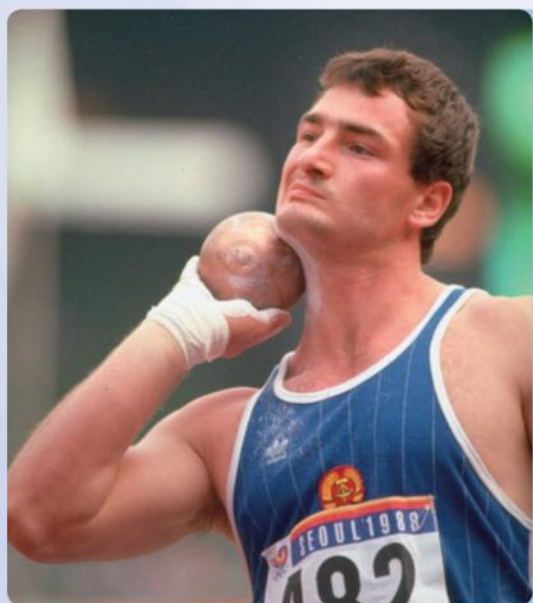
The Czech Republic's Jan Zelezny and Britain's Steve Backley dominated men's Javelin throwing for more than a decade. Backley won four European titles but never a world or Olympic title, frequently beaten only by Zelezny, who won Games gold medals in 1992, 1996 and 2000 and three World Championship titles too.



## UNITED STATES REVOLUTIONARY

American Parry O'Brien always remembered the words of his coach Jesse Mortensen: 'The orthodox is another word for the obsolete.' Whereas previously the accepted shot put technique was a sideways glide across the circle, O'Brien's method was to crouch, facing backwards to begin the movement, allowing him to push the weight for longer and propel the shot further. He took gold at the 1952 and 1956 Games and won 116 successive competitions during that period. His world record of 19.33 metres in 1960 was finally overhauled by compatriot Bill Nieder, who went on to beat O'Brien into second place at Rome 1960, and at Tokyo 1964, his fourth successive Games, O'Brien could only finish fourth. However, his revolutionary technique was adopted by most shot-putters, until the arrival of the spiral style, in which athletes turn as they cross the circle, before releasing the weight.

↑ *Bill Nieder headed an American one-two-three in the men's Shot Put final at Rome 1960 with a new Games record throw of 19.68 metres – compatriots Parry O'Brien and Dallas Long finished second and third respectively.*



## TIMMERMANN'S TITLE

East German shot putter Ulf Timmermann was a supreme exponent of the glide technique. He broke the world record for the first time in 1985 (with a throw of 22.62 metres) and, in the build-up to Seoul 1988, became the first shot putter in history to break the 23-metre barrier (with a throw of 23.06m). And as the men's Shot Put final in Seoul progressed, it soon became clear that Timmermann was the man to beat: he hit the front of the 12-man field as early as the first round (with a throw of 22.02m), extended his lead in the fifth round (22.29m – a new Olympic record) and seemed set for gold. But the USA's Randy Barnes had other ideas, producing a throw of 22.39m to take the lead. It was now or never for the East German ... and he duly lived up to the sense of occasion, producing a throw of 22.47m to take gold.

← *East Germany's Ulf Timmermann won the men's Shot Put final at Seoul 1988 with his final throw – a new Games record of 22.47 metres (eight centimetres ahead of United States' Randy Barnes).*



## GOLDEN FRACTIONS

The men's Shot Put had the honour of being the first Athletics event to be decided at London 2012 and the final developed into a fascinating contest. It is a discipline that has traditionally been ultra-competitive and the 2012 edition was no exception. Defending champion Tomasz Majewski from Poland was bidding to become the first man for 56 years to retain the title, and his biggest rival was thought to be Christian Cantwell, who had produced a season's best 22-metre throw a month earlier. Majewski propelled the shot 21.87 metres in round three to edge into a one centimetre lead over Germany's David Storl. The American Cantwell was not at his best on this night and finished fourth, behind Storl and compatriot Reese Hoffa. Majewski sealed his victory by improving his distance by two centimetres with his last attempt. Big men, small margins ... the Pole won by little more than the length of a fingernail.

↓ *Tomasz Majewski won his second Shot Put gold medal at London 2012.*



↑ *Keshorn Walcott, Trinidad and Tobago's Javelin Throw gold medallist at London 2012, was rewarded by having a lighthouse named after him.*

## TEENAGE TORNADO

Think of Caribbean athletics and sprinting comes to mind. Except for a handful of power athletes from Cuba, field events have been barren territory for the islands. Now, though, there is Keshorn Walcott. The 19-year-old from Trinidad and Tobago announced himself on the global stage by becoming the 2012 World Junior champion, but the Olympic Games event is supposed to be about experience. In the first round of the final, Walcott threw a personal best of 83.51 metres and improved his new national record by 1.07 metres with his second attempt. Competitors stretched every sinew to topple the newcomer, but all fell short. History was looming, as no non-European had won the men's Javelin Throw for 60 years, and there had never been a teenage champion. Walcott became that man.

## LOAN WINNER

Norwegian Egil Danielsen took the men's Javelin Throw title at Melbourne 1956 with a world-record throw thanks to help from two of his rivals. Poland's Janusz Sidlo, the world record holder and twice European champion, lent Danielsen his steel javelin – other competitors, including the Norwegian, had been using wooden spears. Frenchman Michel Macquet also gave him a cup of coffee. Danielsen never usually drank coffee and the stimulating effect gave him a sudden lift. He was only in sixth place, with a best of 72.60 metres, but then produced the throw of his lifetime, 85.71 m, to take the title, and the generous Sidlo immediately congratulated him.

## TOWERING SUCCESS

The Finns have always had a profound affection for the Javelin Throw, and their most revered figure was the bespectacled Matti Jarvinen, who won gold at the 1932 Games in Los Angeles with a throw of 72.71 metres, a distance that his countrymen honoured by making it the height of the tower in the Olympic Stadium when the Games were staged in Helsinki in 1952. He set ten world records during his career, with a best of 77.23 metres.

➔ *Finland has a rich history in men's Javelin Throw at the Games, producing a total of six gold medallists in the event, but none was more revered than Matti Jarvinen, champion at the 1932 Games in Los Angeles.*





# WOMEN'S 100M

As is the case in the men's competition, the women's 100m is one of the most high-profile Olympic races considered the blue riband event of the women's Athletics programme. It was one of only five Athletics events that women contested at Amsterdam 1928, the first time women's events were included at the Games, and it continues to be the centrepiece of the women's event calendar today.

## ASHFORD'S BREAKTHROUGH

The 11-second barrier remained impenetrable in women's 100m competition at the Olympic Games, until Evelyn Ashford finally broke the hoodoo in a gold medal-winning time of 10.97 in Los Angeles in 1984. In the course of a glittering career, Ashford broke the barrier on no fewer than 30 occasions.



↑ Evelyn Ashford (centre) took women's 100m gold after recording a new Games record time of 10.97 seconds at Los Angeles 1984.

## "SHELLY-ANN FRASER LED HOME A JAMAICAN CLEAN SWEEP OF THE WOMEN'S 100M MEDALS IN BEIJING"

### ZERO TO HEROES

Jamaica's rise to the top of sprinting at the Olympic Games was nothing short of meteoric. Prior to Beijing 2008, the nation had never won a gold medal. However, one day on from the sensational track exploits of compatriot Usain Bolt, Shelly-Ann Fraser led home a clean sweep of the medals for the Reggae Nation in the women's 100m final. Fraser, who clocked a personal best time of 10.78 seconds, was followed home by team-mates Sherone Simpson and Kerron Stewart, both of whom finished in a time of 10.98 seconds and were awarded silver medals – completing the first sweep of medals in the women's 100m by any nation at any Olympic Games or World Championships.



## QUEEN MERLENE

Jamaican-born sprinter Merlene Ottey earned the title 'Queen of the Track' for a remarkable career which, by the age of 50, had included competition at seven different Olympic Games. Inspired to take up running by a radio commentary on the 1976 Games in Montreal, she won a bronze medal in the women's 100m four years later in Moscow. Further medals in the women's blue riband event would elude Ottey for 16 years, before she took silver at Atlanta 1996 and a second bronze medal followed at Sydney 2000, when she competed at the age of 40. At Beijing 2008, aged 48, having become a Slovenian national in order to qualify again, Ottey failed by just 0.28 seconds to reach her eighth Olympic Games.

↑ Merlene Ottey picked up her third Olympic Games medal in the women's 100m (bronze) at Sydney 2000 at the tender age of 40.

## GOLDEN DEBUT

Elizabeth 'Betty' Robinson of the United States was the inaugural winner of the women's 100m at the 1928 Games in Amsterdam. She proved that inexperience was no barrier to success, claiming the gold medal in only her fourth competition, at the tender age of 16. She had equalled the world record in just her second race and emulated that feat in the final in Amsterdam. Three years later she came 'back from the dead' following a plane crash. A man found her unconscious in the wreckage and wrongly thought she was dead. He put her in his car boot and drove her to an undertaker's, where she was diagnosed as very much alive, albeit in a coma that would last for seven months. She was unable to walk properly for more than two years but, remarkably, would perform again at the Games – in the women's 4 x 100m Relay at Berlin 1936.

## CLOCK WATCHING

Fully automatic timing (to a hundredth of a second) only became the IAAF's accepted method in January 1977. At the Olympic Games, the gold medal-winning performances by American Wyomia Tyus in 1968 and East German Renate Stecher in 1972, both in 11.07 seconds, were the fastest recorded fully electronic 100m races to that time and were declared world records.



## FABULOUS FLO-JO

The women's 100m world record has now stood for more than 20 years. The time of 10.49 seconds was set by the late Florence Griffith-Joyner, during the US Olympic trials in July 1988. In the mid-1980s she became popularly known as 'Flo-Jo' and was instantly recognisable for her extremely long and colourful fingernails. The record-breaking performance aroused controversy as witnesses questioned whether it was wind-assisted. What was never in doubt was Flo-Jo's speed, and she duly won the gold medal at Seoul 1988 in a time of 10.54. The inspirational effect of the Games competition may be judged by the fact that her best time, before that 1988 season, had been 10.96. Griffith-Joyner retired after her Seoul triumphs – she won two golds and a silver – and died in her sleep from a suspected seizure ten years later at the tragically young age of 38.

➔ *Florence Griffith-Joyner was the class act of the women's 100m final at Seoul 1988: her margin of victory was 0.29 seconds.*



## FLYING DUTCHWOMAN

The 1948 Olympic Games in London heralded the arrival of an unlikely superstar who would be dubbed 'The Flying Housewife'. Dutch athlete Francina Blankers-Koen, better known as Fanny, was the winner of four gold medals at those Games – and a mother of two at a time when women's competition was largely disregarded. She was the first woman to win four gold medals at a single Games, which remains a track and field record to date. In 1999, in recognition of her performance, she was voted Female Athlete of the Century by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF).

➔ *Fanny Blankers-Koen was the first woman to win four gold medals at a single Games.*



## GAIL FORCE

American sprinter-hurdler Gail Devers was as famous for her own Flo-Jo-style fingernails as for winning blanket finishes. At Barcelona 1992, Betty Cuthbert of Jamaica had to settle for silver after finishing one-hundredth of a second behind her. Then, at Atlanta 1996, another Jamaican, Merlene Ottey, came even closer, recording the same time as the American. However, the photo finish gave gold to Devers, who thus emulated compatriot Wyomia Tyus (in 1964 and 1968) by winning consecutive Olympic 100m titles. Devers did not win any Olympic hurdling medals, but did reach four semi-finals.



# WOMEN'S 200M AND 400M

Part of the Games programme since 1948 and 1964 respectively, the women's 200m and 400m have spawned some legendary champions, including Fanny Blankers-Koen and Florence Griffith-Joyner, but only two women in history have claimed the 200m-400m double: the USA's Valerie Brisco-Hooks in 1984 and France's Marie-José Pérec in 1996.

## FROM PODIUM TO STUDIO

Valerie Brisco-Hooks was the leading women's track-and-field athlete at Los Angeles 1984. She accomplished what no other man or woman had ever done by completing a double in the 200m and 400m at the same Games, before winning a third gold medal as part of the United States' winning 4 x 400m Relay team. Two years later she achieved another kind of stardom, appearing on television with Bill Cosby as a guest in an episode of *The Cosby Show*, entitled 'Off to the Races'.



## DOUBLE DOUBLE

Marie-José Pérec completed two doubles at Atlanta 1996. The Guadeloupe-born French sprinter won the 200 metres final and a second 400 metres gold medal, having won at Barcelona 1992

← Pérec would win three gold medals over two Olympics.

## THE FACE OF THE GAMES

In September 2000, the world focused on the women's 400m final in Sydney to watch Cathy Freeman, an Australian Aborigine, who had become the face of the Games after lighting the Olympic Flame at the Opening Ceremony. Freeman duly won gold, becoming the first Australian Aboriginal athletics Olympic champion. On her victory lap she carried both the Aboriginal and Australian flags, and during the competition she had the words 'Cos I'm Free' tattooed mid-way between her shoulder and elbow.



↑ Australia's Marjorie Jackson surged to women's 200m gold at the Helsinki 1952 Games, some 0.5 seconds ahead of her nearest competitor.

## MARJORIE'S THE GOVERNOR

Marjorie Jackson-Nelson, AC, CVO, MBE, sits high in the annals of Australian track-and-field achievement at the Olympic Games. She finished her sporting career with an impressive haul of nine Olympic Games and Commonwealth Games gold medals, having broken ten world records and held every Australian State and National title she contested over a four-year period. Her zenith came at the 1952 Games in Helsinki, when she completed the women's 100m-200m double, to become her nation's first Athletics gold medallist since 1896. At the Opening Ceremony of the 2000 Games in Sydney, Jackson-Nelson was one of eight flag-bearers given the honour of carrying the Olympic Flag. She later became Governor of South Australia, a position she held until 31 July 2007.



## TWO BY TWO

The event has been staged on 16 occasions, but only two women have successfully retained their women's 200m crowns at the Games. The first to do so was East German sprinter Bärbel Wöckel (née Eckert), who struck gold at the 1976 Games in Montreal and again four years later in Moscow. Her achievement was emulated in 2008 by Jamaican athlete Veronica Campbell-Brown, who had previously won the event at the 2004 Games in Athens.

← Veronica Campbell-Brown (right) held off the challenge of Allyson Felix to retain her women's 200m crown at Beijing 2008.



## FELIX WRAP-UP

A race in which history beckoned for a trio of reigning champions at London 2012 saw Allyson Felix come through to win her first Olympic title. Felix had been a three-time world champion at 200m, but the only Olympic gold the Californian had to show for her glittering career had come in the 4 x 400m Relay at Beijing 2008. In the 200m, she had come second at both Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008. Felix flowed round the turn, but was behind 100m queen Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce as they came into the straight. Speed endurance will always win against pure speed in the 200m and Felix strode away with the gold, although Fraser-Pryce maintained her form to clinch the silver. For Felix the medal collection was now complete.

➔ *Allyson Felix (centre) was the only runner to go under 22 seconds in winning the 200m final at London 2012.*



## FLO-JO THE FASTEST EVER

At Seoul 1988, the women's track-and-field events were dominated by Florence Griffith-Joyner, known universally as Flo-Jo. She had already won the women's 100m gold medal and ruled supreme in the 200m, progressing to the final with faster qualifying times in each round. Flo-Jo first broke the world record (which had stood for nine years) in the quarter-finals, before setting a new standard of 21.56 seconds in her semi-final heat. In the final she was imperious, creating a new mark of 21.34 that has never been challenged. In the space of one day, Flo-Jo bettered her world best by 0.4 seconds, earning the accolade 'the fastest woman that ever lived'.

## GOLDEN BETTY

Australia's original 'Golden Girl', Elizabeth 'Betty' Cuthbert won four Olympic gold medals, the highest number by any Australian track-and-field athlete. In a glittering career the golden-haired sprinter set individual world records at 60m, 100yd, 200m, 220yd and 440yd, and at Melbourne 1956 she won gold in the women's 100m and 200m, as well as contributing to her team's 4 x 100m Relay victory. Injury prevented her from performing at her best at Rome 1960, but at Tokyo 1964 she claimed her fourth title when she took the inaugural women's 400m title.

**"AUSTRALIA'S  
GOLDEN GIRL,  
ELIZABETH 'BETTY'  
CUTHBERT WON  
FOUR OLYMPIC  
GOLD MEDALS"**

## SUPREME FROM SANYA

Jamaican-born American Sanya Richards-Ross arrived in London desperate for Olympic recognition in the 400m. She could boast six relay gold medals at global level with United States squads plus an individual world title in 2009, but she had come away from Beijing 2008 with just a single bronze medal. To win, she had to dethrone the reigning Olympic champion Christine Ohuruogu in her own backyard. A few stars and stripes were dotted around the stadium, but the final was played out in front of a sea of Union flags and fans roaring on Ohuruogu. The Russian Federation's Antonina Krivoschapka went off at an impossible pace to sustain over a full lap and paid for the effort in the final 100 metres. Richards-Ross, however, paced her race perfectly, and had enough in hand to hold off a trademark Ohuruogu rush to the line.

↓ *Sanya Richards-Ross beat Christine Ohuruogu to gold in the women's 400m final at London 2012.*





# WOMEN'S 100M AND 400M HURDLES

Women's Hurdles events are contested over two distances – 100m and 400m – and have been part of the Games since 1972 and 1984 respectively. Remarkably, no woman in history has been able to defend her crown.

## CHANGING TIMES

The East German athlete Annelie Ehrhardt competed at a time of unparalleled transition for the women's sprint Hurdles contest. The event had been a part of the Games programme ever since Los Angeles 1932, but had been raced over 80 metres until Ehrhardt's inaugural success over 100m at the 1972 Games. Her new electronic world record performance of 12.59 seconds in the final also came during the transition between hand and electronic timing, and a year later she set the last recognised hand-timed world record for the 100m hurdles of 12.3 in the East German national championships at Dresden.



↑ *Joanna Hayes edged to women's 100m Hurdles gold by 0.08 seconds (ahead of the Ukraine's Olena Krasovska) at Athens 2004.*

## OLYMPIC IDEAL IN ACTION

While an Olympic Games gold medal is regarded by many as a form of heroism, Athens 2004 women's 100m Hurdles champion Joanna Hayes has targeted a different level of success at grass-roots level. Hayes is the daughter of Los Angeles homeless advocate Ted Hayes, but was primarily raised by her mother. Following her crowning moment on the track, during which she set a new Games record time of 12.38 seconds, she has established the Joanna Hayes Foundation, whose aim is: 'To open the eyes and broaden the horizons of children living in the most challenging situations and help them see new options and prepare for new futures.'



## DEVERS DISASTER

The Athletics track at Barcelona 1992 was the setting for one of the biggest shocks in the history of Olympic track-and-field competition. The final of the women's 100m Hurdles was expected to be the defining moment in American superstar Gail Devers' career. However, she had not reckoned on the surprise element in Greek competitor Paraskevi ('Voula') Patoulidou, the first woman to represent her nation in a track final at the Games. Devers, the red-hot favourite for gold, tripped on the last hurdle, allowing Patoulidou to join her on the finishing line in a time of 12.64 seconds. Voula immediately celebrated her silver-medal achievement – and then learned that she had in fact won gold, making her the first Greek woman in history to do so. Her victory inspired a nation, and subsequent Greek athletes have referred to Patoulidou's triumph as the catalyst for their ambitions.

↑ *Gail Devers crashes to the track after hitting the final hurdle in the women's 100m Hurdles final at Barcelona 1992.*

## RECORDS, RECORDS

The women's 100m Hurdles world record of 12.21 seconds was set during what proved a glorious 1988 for Bulgarian sprinter Yordanka Donkova. She had come to prominence during 1986, when she broke four world records and became European champion, but in 1988 she set the world record just one month before the 1988 Games in Seoul. Although she failed to better that time, she set a then Games record time of 12.38 in winning the gold medal.

## NEWCOMERS' GLORY

Jamaica's domination of sprinting events at the Games is a relatively recent track-and-field phenomenon. Deon Hemmings (at Atlanta 1996) was the first Jamaican woman to win a gold medal when she won the women's 400m Hurdles. No champion has successfully defended her title in this event at the Games, but Hemmings came closest when she won the silver medal behind Russian Irina Privalova at Sydney 2000.



## PEARSON PINCHES IT

Sally Pearson's triumph in the women's 100m Hurdles at London 2012 marked the climax of two seasons of outstanding form. The queen of Australian track and field arrived in the Olympic final having lost just one race across the 2011 and 2012 campaigns, and had the hopes of a nation on her slim shoulders. Pearson started well and with 20 metres to go it seemed a foregone conclusion, but reigning champion Dawn Harper produced a blistering finish to make it very close. After an agonising wait, Pearson let out a piercing scream of delight as her name flashed up on the giant scoreboard above the Olympic Flame, confirming her gold medal, and reversing the result with Harper from Beijing 2008. There can be little doubt that Pearson's prize was richly deserved.

➔ *Sally Pearson (centre) took the 100m Hurdles gold medal at London 2012.*



## GOLDEN TRACK INTO IOC

Nawal El Moutawakel, the first-ever women's 400m Hurdles champion, at Los Angeles 1984, was also the first African-born female Muslim to win a gold medal. Her victory was seen as a breakthrough for Muslim and Arabic woman athletes, and the King of Morocco telephoned El Moutawakel afterwards to offer his congratulations – he also declared that all girls born on the day of her victory were to be named in her honour. In 1995, she became a council member for the IAAF and three years later was appointed to the International Olympic Committee, attaining the position of President of Evaluation Commissions for the selection process for the Host City in 2012 and 2016. In 2007, El Moutawakel was also named the Minister of Sports in Morocco.

## SUPER SALLY

Several athletes have made the transition from the 100m Hurdles to 400m or vice versa, but Britain's Sally Gunnell stands as the most successful convert, having started her career as a long jumper and pentathlete. After winning gold at the 1986 Commonwealth Games in the 100m Hurdles, she decided to move up in distance and remains the only woman to have held the European, World, Commonwealth and Olympic 400m Hurdles titles at the same time. Her Olympic gold medal was achieved at Barcelona 1992, where she narrowly edged out her great rival American Sandra Farmer-Patrick. The following year, she beat Farmer-Patrick again, this time in a world record time of 52.74 seconds, to become world champion.

## SPEED PAYS FOR ANTYUKH

Natalya Antyukh won a bronze medal in the 400m at Beijing 2008. Natural speed was not a issue when she switched disciplines to the 400m Hurdles – just the obstacles on the track. Antyukh bolted from the gun, but she could not make any impression on world champion Lashinda Demus. At 250 metres they were level, but Antyukh was clearly moving the better entering the end of the turn. Demus stuck to her task, but Antyukh led by three metres. Russian Federation nerves were frayed as the far-from-natural hurdler stuttered preparing to meet the final hurdle. The more fluid Demus gained, but Antyukh's flat speed saw her through in an exciting finish. When victory was confirmed, in a personal best time of 52.70, she sank to her knees and offered a personal prayer.

➔ *Natalya Antyukh's switch from 400m to 400m Hurdles paid off at London 2012 with a gold medal.*





## WOMEN'S 800M AND 1500M

The women's 800m was first contested at the Olympic Games at Amsterdam 1928 and, after a 32-year break, at every Games since Rome 1960; the women's 1500m has been staged since 1972. Three women - Tatyana Kazankina (1976), Svetlana Masterkova (1996) and Kelly Holmes (2004) - have achieved the 800m-1500m double.

### LONG-DISTANCE CHAMPION

For many years it seemed Karoline ('Lina') Radke-Batschauer would stand alone as the only ever winner of the women's 800m at the Olympic Games. With assistance from her husband and coach Georg Radke, she trained hard for the 1928 Games in Amsterdam and set a world record of 2:16.8 en route to the final. She went on to win the gold medal, but the race was overshadowed by concerns for several of her competitors, who finished it completely exhausted, and the IOC banished the event from its programme, fearing that women did not have the constitution to compete over such a distance. The women's 800m did not return to the programme until Rome 1960.

### BRILLIANT BRAGINA

Unlike the men, who have raced over 1500m since the first modern Games in 1896, women did not compete in the 'metric mile' until Munich 1972. Soviet athlete Lyudmila Bragina dominated the inaugural event, shattering the world record in all three rounds and taking the gold medal in 4:01:38.

### GOLDEN GIRL

The Soviet Union's Nadezhda Olizarenko became a national heroine when she won gold in the women's 800m at Moscow 1980, ahead of compatriots Olga Mineyeva and Tatyana Providokhina. Her world-record time of 1:53.43, set later that year, has only once been bettered, by Jarmila Kratochvílová, in 1983.



↑ Mozambique's Maria Mutola, women's 800m champion at Sydney 2000, made the last of her six appearances at Beijing 2008.

### MAGIC MUTOLA

Between the 1990s and 2000s, no women's 800m event was complete without Maria Mutola. Mozambique's superstar athlete competed in her sixth Olympic Games in Beijing, making her only the fourth athlete to accomplish this feat. After previous near misses, the 'Maputo Express' had her moment of glory when she won gold at Sydney 2000. She was appointed an honorary United Nations youth ambassador in 2003, and now her Lurdes Mutola Foundation aims to bring more young Mozambicans to sport and help them achieve their sporting and educational potential.

### KENYA CATCH-UP

While Kenya's male athletes had long been admired in middle- and long-distance track-and-field events, it was not until 2008 that the women matched that success. Pamela Jelimo became the first Kenyan woman to win a gold medal at the Games when she won the women's 800m. A few days later Nancy Langat won the women's 1500m to make it a double celebration for Kenya.

### KELLY HOLMES AT THE DOUBLE

Kelly Holmes came to full-time athletics at the late age of 22. Having been an outstanding junior athlete, she joined the British Army, where she continued to compete, even running against the men over 800 metres. Sebastian Coe's exploits at the Games had inspired the young Holmes, and in 1992, after watching the Games in Barcelona, she returned to the sport full-time. Her career was continually beset by injuries, but she arrived at Athens in 2004 injury free and duly won gold in both the women's 800m and 1500m, becoming Britain's first double gold medallist at the same Games since 1920. A year later, she became a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

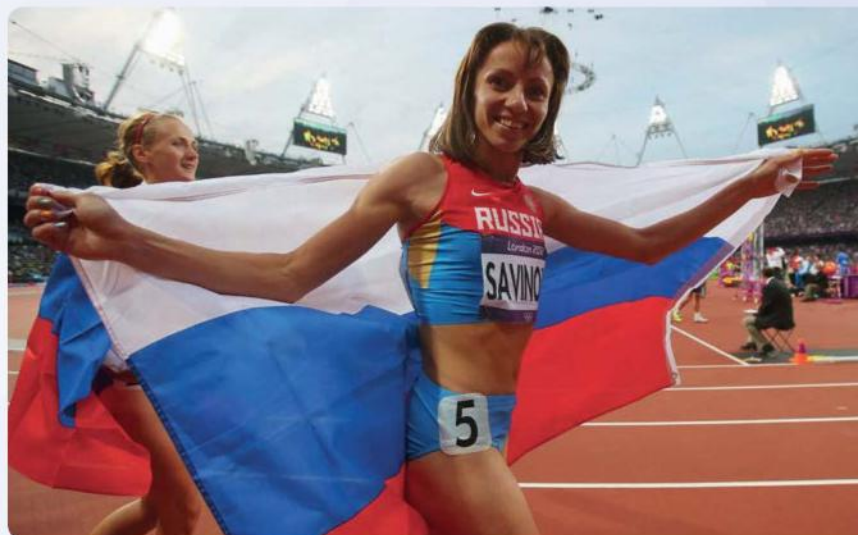
◀ Double delight for Kelly Holmes as she completes the women's 800m-1500m double at Athens 2004.



## STYLE AND GLORY ... AND GOLD

The women's 800m at London 2012 was a highly competitive race that saw the cream come to the top, with the Russian Federation's Mariya Savinova proving herself to be No.1 and complete her set of gold medals in the event, having won European and world titles in 2010 and 2011 respectively. American Alysia Montano took the field through the first lap in 56.31 seconds, and the urgent pace was taken on by Kenya's defending Olympic champion Pamela Jelimo down the back straight. All the time Savinova was confidently moving through the gears. She caught Jelimo at the perfect place, rounding the final bend and elegantly galloped to victory in 1.56.19. This is how gold medals should be won, with masses of ability and plenty of style.

➔ *Mariya Savinova of the Russian Federation took women's 800m gold at London 2012, holding off the fast-finishing South African Costa Semanya.*



## PACKER'S PRIDE

Britain's middle-distance women – unlike the men with their pedigree in the 800m at the Games – had failed to make an impression before 1964. Ann Packer was the unlikely heroine who would change things. Packer began her career as a sprinter and at Tokyo 1964 had high hopes of winning gold in the women's 400m. In the event she took the silver medal behind Australian Betty Cuthbert, but sought to improve on it in the women's 800m, an event she had only ever raced on five occasions. She qualified for the final as the slowest of the eight competitors, but used her old sprinting style in the final to win gold in a world record time of 2:02.8. She retired after the Games.

## SILVER FOR SEMENYA

When 18-year-old Caster Semenya burst on to the 800m scene at the 2009 World Championships in Berlin, the athletics world did not know what to make of it. The muscularly built South African was a class apart from her competitors at such a young age. Intense media scrutiny led to a messy saga of the teenager being subjected to gender testing for the best part of a year. She was cleared as a bona fide woman, regrouped and won a silver at the 2011 World Championships in Daegu. At London 2012 she eased into the final, during which she was content to stick at the back of the pack for the first 500 metres. As others wilted in the searing pace, Semenya gained ground, but her impressive effort was too late to catch winner Mariya Savinova.

## SOVIET SUPERSTAR

Tatyana Kazankina competed for the old Soviet Union over middle distances, setting seven world records and winning three Olympic Games gold medals along the way. Having become the first woman to break the four-minute barrier over 1500m, a month before the 1976 Games, she struck gold in both the women's 800m and 1500m (to become the first woman in history to win the double), breaking the world record in the former with a new mark of 1:54.94. Four years later, she retained her women's 1500m title in Moscow and shattered that event's world record in a time of 3:52.47, which remained unbeaten for 13 years. In 1976, Kazankina was awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Labour and the title Honoured Master of Sports of the USSR.



↑ Soviet Union sprinter Tatyana Kazankina won the 800 metres final at the Montreal 1976 Olympic Games and was almost half a second clear of the field as she set a new world record.



## WOMEN'S 5000M AND 10,000M

Women's long-distance track events are relatively new to the Games programme: strangely, the women's 10,000m came first – at Seoul 1988 – and the women's 5000m did not make its debut until the 1996 Games in Atlanta. Only one woman, Ethiopia's Tirunesh Dibaba at Beijing 2008, has achieved the accolade of claiming the 5000m- 10,000m double.

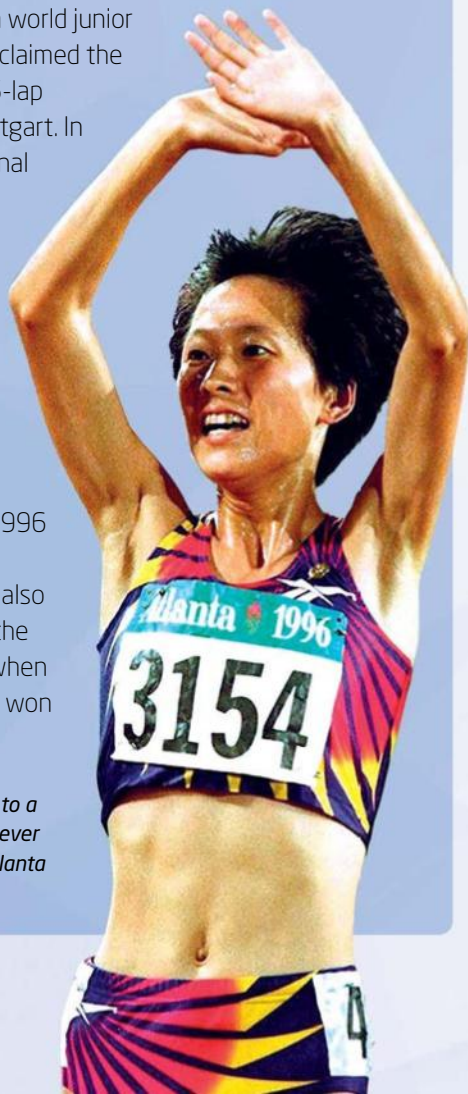
### SZABO FINDS HER MÉTIER

After flirting with gymnastics and swimming in her younger years, Romania's Gabriela Szabo switched to track-and-field events when it became apparent that she would not be good enough to make it professionally in the other disciplines. In 1996, after failing to qualify for the women's 5000m final, Szabo won silver in the women's 1500m competition. Four years later, at Sydney 2000, Szabo ran a world-record time of 14:40.79 in the women's 5000m final to win the gold medal.

### WANG JUNXIA'S CHINESE REVOLUTION

China's Wang Junxia dominated the world of women's long-distance running for a short but memorable period in the mid-1990s. Having won the women's 10,000m world junior championship in 1992, she claimed the world senior title for the 25-lap distance a year later in Stuttgart. In 1993, at the Chinese National Games, Junxia set her iconic women's 10,000m world record of 29:31.78 – the first-ever sub-30-minute performance by a woman. Although she never improved on her peak form of 1993, Junxia went on to win the inaugural women's 5000m gold medal at the 1996 Games in Atlanta (ahead of Kenya's Pauline Konga) and also claimed the silver medal in the women's 10,000m event (when Portugal's Fernanda Ribeiro won the gold medal).

→ China's Wang Junxia surged to a comfortable victory in the first-ever women's 5000m final at the Atlanta Games in 1996.



### HAND IN HAND

Following her dramatic victory in the women's 10,000m final at Barcelona 1992, Ethiopia's Derartu Tulu waited at the finish line for her opponent Elana Meyer, a white South African, and the two set off hand in hand for a victory lap that came to symbolise new hope for Africa. At Sydney 2000, having regained her form of eight years earlier, Tulu again won gold in the women's 10,000m event, becoming the first woman to win two gold medals in long-distance races at the Games and the only woman to win 10,000m gold twice.

↓ Ethiopia's Derartu Tulu (left, the gold medallist) and South Africa's Elana Meyer (right, silver) celebrate after the women's 10,000m final at Barcelona 1992.



### BAREFOOT AND CONTROVERSIAL

Zola Budd – born, brought up and awarded star status in South Africa – attracted headlines of controversy in 1984 when she was awarded British citizenship on the strength of a British grandfather. Her subsequent decision to run for Britain at Los Angeles 1984 caused uproar among those who deemed the move as a convenient way to bypass the ban that had been imposed on South African athletes as a result of apartheid. The controversy pursued her all the way to the Games, in which, in the women's 3000m, she collided with the American favourite Mary Decker, who fell and failed to finish the race. The following year, Budd smashed the women's 5000m world record, running the race barefoot in 14:48.07 – 10 seconds faster than the previous record. In fact, the race was really her second women's 5000m world record, but the first could not be recognised because it was set during a race in South Africa.

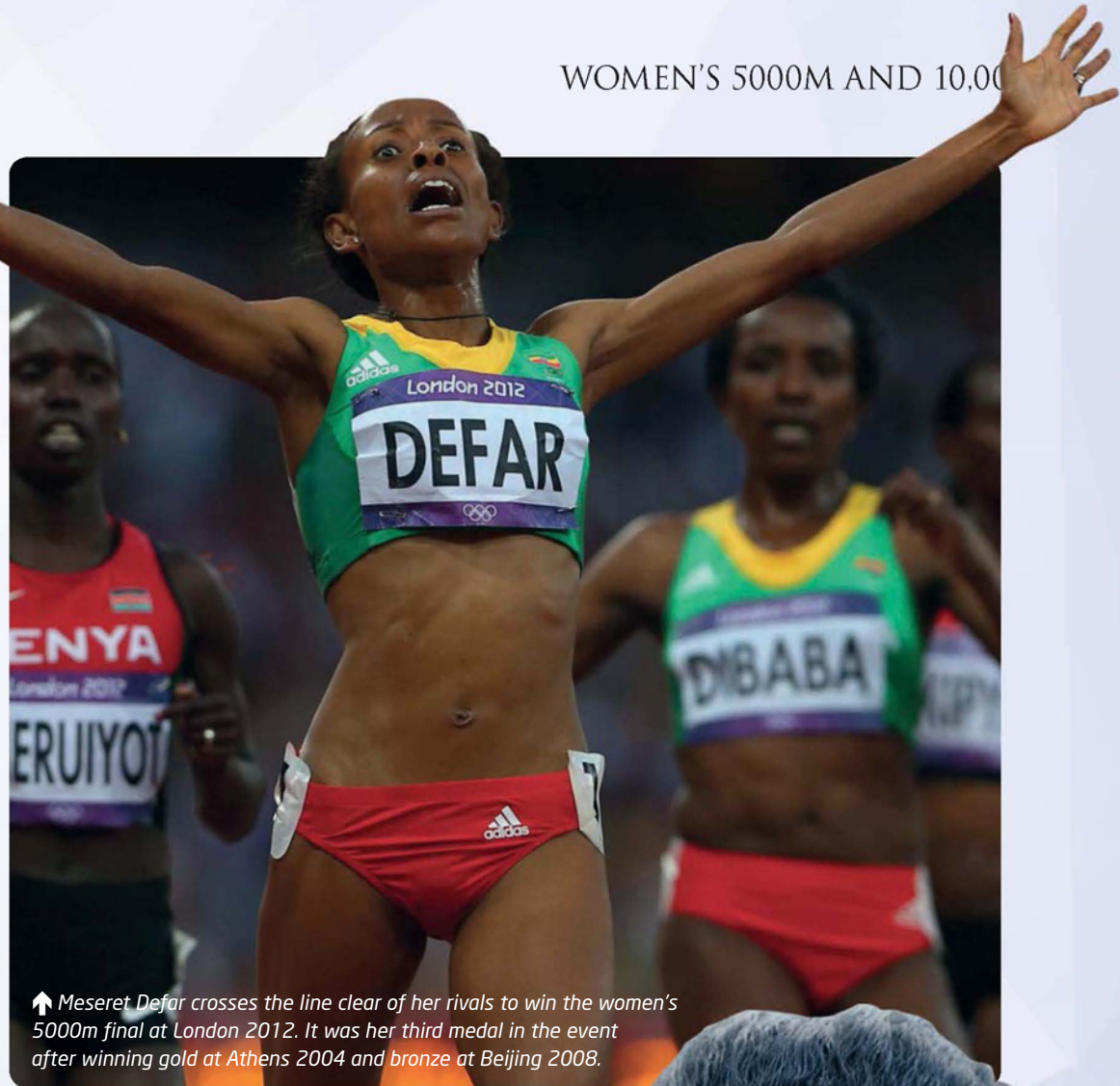
### ETHIOPIAN DOMINANCE

The Oromo ethnic group found in Ethiopia must be one of the most athletically blessed on Earth. The list of long-distance running champions it has produced includes Haile Gebrselassie, Abebe Bikila, and Sileshi Sihine, as well as the Dibaba sisters and Derartu Tulu.



## PATIENCE PAYS FOR DEFAR

Meseret Defar's misfortune has been in running in the same era as arguably the greatest female distance athlete ever seen – Tirunesh Dibaba, who also happened to be her Ethiopian team-mate. There had been an Olympic gold medal at Athens 2004 and four world indoor titles, but despite all that Dibaba's name was pre-eminent. However, a slow opening to the women's 5000m final at London 2012 played into Defar's hands, and she had the power when it came to the closing stages. Dibaba tried to lift the pace from four laps out, gradually accelerating and trying to run the finish out of her rival with consecutive 68-second laps. With 800 metres to go, it was a predictable Ethiopia-Kenya battle, with Defar biding her time. The bell came and went, Dibaba went for home, but Defar held on for gold.



↑ Meseret Defar crosses the line clear of her rivals to win the women's 5000m final at London 2012. It was her third medal in the event after winning gold at Athens 2004 and bronze at Beijing 2008.

## STEP TOO FAR FOR 'QUEEN' KRISTIENSEN

Ingrid Kristiansen boasts a unique achievement in, simultaneously, having held world records at women's 5000m, 10,000m, 15 kilometres, half marathon and marathon. The Norwegian's fabulous career also brought an IAAF World Championships women's 10,000m victory, plus multiple triumphs in the marathons of London (four), Stockholm (three), Boston and Houston (two each) as well as Chicago and New York City. But the Olympic Games proved a step too far. She was fourth in the women's Marathon at the 1984 Games in Los Angeles, was halted in the women's 10,000m in Seoul in 1988 by a foot injury and had retired by the time the women's 5000m was added to the Games schedule in 1996.

## QUEEN BY A DISTANCE

Ethiopian star Tirunesh Dibaba successfully defended her 10,000m Olympic title in majestic style at London 2012, winning both the tactical and physical battle and her country's arch-rivals Kenya. After a quiet opening 3,000 metres, the East Africans moved to the front and began to dominate – a formula witnessed at so many major distance finals. Gradually, as the pace increased, the contenders were whittled down to just Dibaba and a pair of Kenyans. With three laps to go, Sally Kipyego moved to the front, Dibaba went with her and world champion Vivian Cheruiyot moved to third. Dibaba calculated that a lap-and-a-half from the finish was the time to put the foot on the accelerator. The Kenyans had nothing left and Dibaba strode round on a victory lap.

➔ Tirunesh Dibaba shows off the gold medal she won at London 2012, her second in the women's 10,000m, following her success at Beijing 2008.





# WOMEN'S HEPTATHLON AND STEEPLECHASE

The women's Heptathlon, contested since the 1984 Games, consists of seven events – 100m hurdles, high jump, shot put, 200m, long jump, javelin throw and 800m. The women's 3,000m Steeplechase was first staged at Beijing 2008.

## UNIQUE AUSTRALIAN

The first Heptathlon gold medallist was Glynis Nunn, the only Australian to win a multi-discipline Athletics event at the Games. The former physical education teacher had quit her job and gone on the dole in order to concentrate on preparing for Los Angeles 1984. It was a desperately close competition, which was sealed by the long jump. American Jackie Joyner-Kersey, a long-jump specialist and Nunn's closest rival, set a disappointing distance with her only legal leap and it left her with a narrow lead before the last discipline, the 800m. Nunn's time was 2.46 seconds faster than Joyner-Kersey's, and she won gold by five points with a final total of 6,390.

## HEPTATHLON BREAKTHROUGH

The image of women athletes in the Olympic Movement has undergone a startling evolution. Whereas in the early days they were considered to be delicate creatures, who needed to be restricted from competing in endurance events, they are now regarded as hardened athletes. The former impression prevailed until 1964, when the women's Pentathlon was first admitted to the programme in Tokyo. The five-event formula was replaced by the current Heptathlon in 1984, comprising seven events over two days: on the first day the 100m hurdles, the high jump, the shot put and the 200m take place; the second day sees the long jump, the javelin throw and the gruelling 800m.



## J-K A CLASS APART

In the pantheon of Olympic Games Heptathlon greats, Jackie Joyner-Kersey stands alone as the greatest competitor. Having won the silver medal at Los Angeles 1984, she became the first woman to score over 7,000 points at the Goodwill Games in 1986 and bettered that with her gold medal-winning and world-record score of 7,291 points at Seoul 1988. Joyner-Kersey remains the only woman to retain her title, capturing a second gold at Barcelona 1992. Not content with Heptathlon competition, the gifted American set a Games record of 7.40 metres in the women's Long Jump in Seoul and later played professional basketball for the Richmond Rage. Joyner-Kersey was voted the Greatest Female Athlete of the 20th Century by *Sports Illustrated for Women* magazine.

↑ *Women's Heptathlon gold medallist at the 1988 Games, Jackie Joyner-Kersey made a successful defence of her title at Barcelona 1992.*



## "JACKIE JOYNER-KERSEE STANDS ALONE AS THE GREATEST OLYMPIC HEPTATHLON COMPETITOR"

## KLÜFT CORONATION

Carolina Klüft dominated the women's Heptathlon in the early years of the 21st century. The Swede was unbeaten in 22 heptathlon and pentathlon competitions between 2002 and 2007, winning nine consecutive major championship gold medals, including three World Championships and the Olympic Games gold medal at Athens 2004, at which she won by a Games record margin of 517 points. Her personal best score of 7,032 points, achieved at the 2007 World Championships in Osaka, Japan, sits second on the all-time list behind Jackie Joyner-Kersey.

← *Carolina Klüft's domination of the Heptathlon climaxed with a gold medal at Athens 2004.*



## DANCING QUEEN

Denise Lewis made her Games debut at Atlanta 1996, winning bronze. By the time of the 2000 Games, the Briton was already European champion. In Sydney, the world champion Eunice Barber and defending Olympic Games champion Ghada Shouaa both had to abandon the competition through injury, clearing the path for Lewis's gold-medal assault. The turning point came in the javelin, in which her throw of 50.19 metres took her into first place with just one event remaining, the 800m. Although her nearest rival, the Belarusian Natallia Sazanovich, finished ahead, Lewis completed in a time of 2:16.83 – just enough to hold on to the gold medal. Injury hampered Lewis's hopes of defending her title at Athens 2004.

## EVOLVING EVENT

The women's Heptathlon replaced the Pentathlon at the Olympic Games from 1984, but it may, in time, be replaced by a women's Decathlon (over ten events). Decathlons have become more common recently and the IAAF has started to keep records for the event but, in the meantime, the Heptathlon is still the standard.



↑ *One for Europe as the Russian Federation's Yuliya Zaripova won 3000m Steeplechase gold at London 2012; African athletes filled the next five places.*

## ZARIPOVA ZIPS TO GLORY

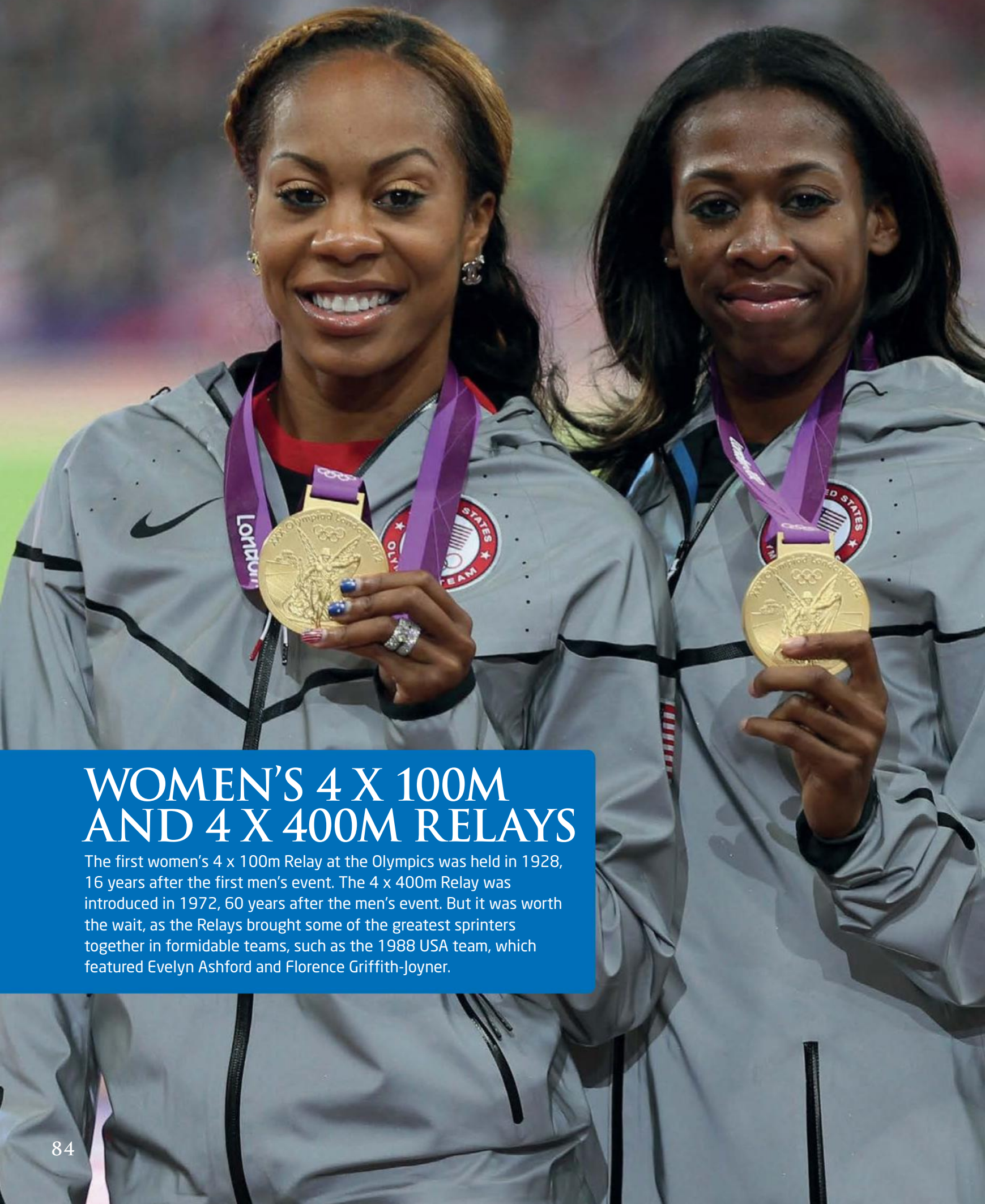
The Olympic cycle occasionally throws up teams and individuals who achieve preeminence in between the Games, but who fail to sustain their form when it really matters on any given date every four years. Yuliya Zaripova, the Russian Federation steeplechaser, could have gone that way, but didn't. She had been crowned European and World champion between Beijing 2008 and London 2012, and from the start of the final she appeared to be a woman on a mission. Three Ethiopians, a pair of Kenyans and Tunisia's Habiba Ghribi stayed with Zaripova as she gradually extended herself. With less than 1,000 metres remaining, the unfit defending champion and world record holder Gulnara Galkina pulled out, Zaripova demanded more of her pursuers and it ultimately proved to be too much for them. It was a classy performance from a true champion.

## WORTH THE WAIT

While the men's 3000m Steeplechase has been on the Games programme since 1920, it was only in 2008, in Beijing, that women could compete in the event at the Games. The race saw 15 competitors negotiate 28 hurdles of 0.762 metres in height (the men jump hurdles 0.914m tall). The wait was worthwhile though, with Russian athlete Gulnara Samitova-Galkina winning the gold medal – ahead of Kenya's Eunice Jepkorir (silver) and Russia's Yekaterina Volkova (bronze) – and becoming the first woman to run under nine minutes, in a new world best time of 8:58.81.

← *Russia's Gulnara Samitova-Galkina won the inaugural women's 3000m Steeplechase gold medal at Beijing 2008 in a world record-breaking time.*





## WOMEN'S 4 X 100M AND 4 X 400M RELAYS

The first women's 4 x 100m Relay at the Olympics was held in 1928, 16 years after the first men's event. The 4 x 400m Relay was introduced in 1972, 60 years after the men's event. But it was worth the wait, as the Relays brought some of the greatest sprinters together in formidable teams, such as the 1988 USA team, which featured Evelyn Ashford and Florence Griffith-Joyner.





### UNITED STATES BY A DISTANCE

The final women's event of the London 2012 Olympic Games was also one of the biggest anti-climaxes. Excellence is to be treasured in sport, but the 4 x 400m relay relies on closely fought battles to create a spectacle. After 500 metres of the women's 4 x 400m Relay at London 2012 the result was a foregone conclusion. America's DeeDee Trotter, bronze medallist in the individual 400m, ran 49.5 and Allyson Felix, going for her third gold of the Games ran even faster – 48.8. It was game over, and it was left to Francena McCorory and 400m champion Sanya Richards-Ross to bring the baton home for the United States fully 30 metres clear of the silver medallists. The dominance recalled the East German displays in the long form of the women's relay in the 1980s, but in a very different context.

↑ *The United States women's 4 x 400m Relay team was utterly dominant at London 2012, winning gold by a margin of 3.34 seconds.*



## WOMEN'S ROAD EVENTS

Although the Marathon has been contested by men at every Games since Athens 1896, the first women's Marathon did not take place until Los Angeles 1984. The women's 20km Race Walk is a more recent addition, but has been part of the Games programme since Sydney 2000.



↑ Romania's Constantina Tomescu heads the women's Marathon field at Beijing 2008.

### OLDEST MARATHON CHAMPION

At 38 years of age, Romania's Constantina Tomescu won the 2008 women's Marathon in Beijing in a time of 2:26:44, beating her nearest rival by 22 seconds. Her gold-medal triumph not only made her the oldest Marathon champion ever, male or female, but also the oldest Marathon medallist in Olympic Games history.

### WOMEN MAKE THEIR POINT

In 1966, after not being granted an official entry into the Boston Marathon, Roberta Gibb joined the race from behind a bush – and finished in an unofficial time of 3:21:25. The following year, K.V. Switzer entered the Boston Marathon and it wasn't until two miles into the race that officials realised the runner was a woman, Kathrine Switzer. Despite the officials' best efforts, 20-year-old Switzer finished the race, and the following day the national papers propelled the issue of women's long-distance running into the public eye. Switzer went on to lobby for the inclusion of a women's Marathon at the Olympic Games and was instrumental in the IOC's decision in 1981 to introduce the event.

### DEBUT DRAMA

Perhaps the most dramatic scenes at the inaugural women's Marathon at Los Angeles 1984 – and indeed of the entire Games – came after the medals had been decided. Entering the stadium around 20 minutes after winner Joan Benoit, Swiss competitor Gabriele Andersen-Scheiss had spectators gasping in horror when she staggered on to the track, painfully exhausted. Cheered on by the crowd, she stumbled and limped towards the finish line in clear distress, before collapsing into the arms of waiting medics. Her courageous effort placed her 37th of 44 finishers, with a time of 2:48:42, and immortalised Andersen-Scheiss in Games folklore as a symbol of courage and determination.

### FIRST FOR JAPAN

Naoko Takahashi created history at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, becoming the first Japanese woman to collect a track-and-field gold medal when she won the women's Marathon. She joined the record books in style, setting an Olympic record time of 2:23:14. Afterwards, she went on to become the first woman to ever break the magical 2:20 barrier, running 2:19:46 during the 2001 Berlin Marathon.

➔ Japan's Naoko Takahashi takes women's Marathon gold at Sydney 2000.



### WORLD RECORD

Vera Sokolova broke the world record in the women's 20km walk in spectacular fashion at the 2011 Russian Federation national championships, shaving a massive 33 seconds off the previous record, which was set by fellow Russian Olimpiada Ivanova and had stood since 2005.

### HISTORY GIRL

The women's Marathon was finally introduced to the Olympic Games programme at Los Angeles 1984, marking the day that women runners had long been campaigning for. American runner Joan Benoit was one of 50 competitors from 28 nations who started the first women's Marathon, and she went on to be the first champion, winning on home soil in 2:24:52. Norwegian Grete Waitz finished second and Portugal's Rosa Mota third.





◀ A moment of quiet despair for Paula Radcliffe after she pulled out of the Marathon at Athens 2004.

## TIME OUT...

Paula Radcliffe confirmed her place in marathon folklore in 2005 with a 15-second toilet stop on the side of the road five miles from the finish of the London Marathon. She duly powered to her third London title in 2:17:42.

## WALKING IN

The women's Race Walk was only recently welcomed into the Olympic Games programme. After being introduced as a 10-kilometre event in 1992, it was then replaced by a 20km walk in 2000. At Beijing 2008, Olga Kaniskina won the gold medal and set a then Games record for the fastest women's 20km Race Walk in a time of 1:26:31, smashing the previous record of 1:29.05 set by Wang Liping at Sydney 2000.

## REMARKABLE RADCLIFFE

Paula Radcliffe is synonymous with female Marathon running. The British runner, who hails from the small village of Davenham in Cheshire, enjoyed massive success on the big-city marathon circuit, earning multiple wins in London, New York and Chicago. Following an impressive track career, Radcliffe's Marathon debut in London in 2002 set a best time (2:18:56) for a women's-only race, a European record and the fastest-ever debut over the 26-mile distance. After she had smashed the world record by 1:29 in Chicago later that year with a time of 2:17:18, it was on home soil that Radcliffe set her incredible world record of 2:15:25 at the 2003 London Marathon – a time not bettered by any British male that year and that still stands today. Radcliffe's dream of Olympic Games gold was shattered at Athens 2004. Having gone into the race a firm favourite, she pulled out at the 23-mile mark. Her disappointment at the Games continued at Beijing 2008, when she struggled to a 23rd-place finish.

## LASHMANOVA IS 'THE ONE'

Women have only one Race Walk at the Olympic Games, the 20km event, so all available talent at the sport has only one chance of glory. At London 2012, the defending champion from Beijing 2008, Olga Kaniskina, set the pace on the ten circuits around some of the city's best-known tourist attractions and at 14km she had a 33-second lead, but Elena Lashmanova cut that to 17 seconds with 2km to go. Lashmanova, surged up and down the hill alongside Buckingham Palace and, with less than 200m to go, caught her Russian Federation team-mate and went on to win by seven seconds in a world record 1:25:02.

## NEVER MIND THE RAIN

Marathon runners do not mind the rain, so London – which hosts a popular and well-supported annual event each spring – is a favourite venue. Heavy rain greeted the starters of the Marathon at London 2012 but, by halfway, the rain had subsided. Africans dominated the race, but there was a strong Eastern European presence, too. It was an Ethiopian, Tiki Gelana, who seized the moment, powering to victory in a time of 2:23:07. Kenya's Priscah Jeptoo held off the Russian Federation's Tatyana Arkhipova to claim silver.

↓ Tiki Gelana of Ethiopia splashed through the rain at London 2012 to win the women's Marathon in a new Olympic Games record time.





# WOMEN'S HIGH JUMP AND POLE VAULT

The High Jump was one of five events to be contested by women at the Amsterdam 1928 Olympic Games. In contrast, the women's Pole Vault is relatively new to the Olympic Games: it was staged for the first time at Sydney 2000.

## ROLLING AND DIVING

High jumping has long been regarded as an event open to experimental technique, the most prominent example being the introduction of the Fosbury Flop by US athlete Dick Fosbury at Mexico City 1968. However, in 1932, when Babe Didrikson leaped to a new world record of 1.67 metres, tying with her US compatriot Jean Shiley in Los Angeles, it was Shiley who was awarded the gold medal. Didrikson had used the Western Roll technique, which at the time was regarded as 'diving', so was awarded silver.

## TEST OF TIME

In 1987, Bulgaria's Stefka Kostadinova set a women's high jump world record of 2.09 metres. It remained one of the longest-standing world records in modern athletics and was one of seven world records (both indoor and outdoor) that Kostadinova set during a glittering career. Having won a silver medal at Seoul 1988, Kostadinova went one better at Atlanta 1996, winning the gold medal with a Games record of 2.05m. She later became president of the Bulgarian Olympic Committee.

↓ *Bulgaria's Stefka Kostadinova leaps to gold in the women's High Jump at Atlanta 1996. She had won a silver medal in the event at Seoul 1988.*



## SASKATOON LILY

The women's High Jump competition at the Games began with a touch of glamour at Amsterdam 1928. The winner, Ethel Catherwood, broke the world record with a height of 1.59 metres, becoming the first (and still the only) Canadian female athlete to have won individual gold in track and field at the Games. Her natural good looks did not go unnoticed and a *New York Times* correspondent labelled her the 'prettiest girl athlete', while she earned the nickname 'Saskatoon Lily'. After her success, Catherwood became embroiled in scandal, with two failed marriages in the media spotlight. She later moved to California and admitted she was really American, having been born in Hannah, North Dakota.

↑ *Ethel Catherwood became the first Olympic Games women's High Jump champion at Amsterdam 1928.*

## CSAK'S SPECIAL CELEBRATION IN BERLIN

Hungarian high jumper Ibolya Csák won one of the closest women's High Jump competitions ever seen at the Games, at Berlin 1936. Three competitors cleared 1.60 metres, but all failed to clear 1.62m, until Csák succeeded at the fourth attempt. As a Jew, her victory had extra poignancy, coming at a time of increasing anti-Semitism in Germany. Two years later, she became European champion in bizarre circumstances, after the winner, Dora Ratjen, was disqualified for being a man; his participation was a ploy by the Nazis.

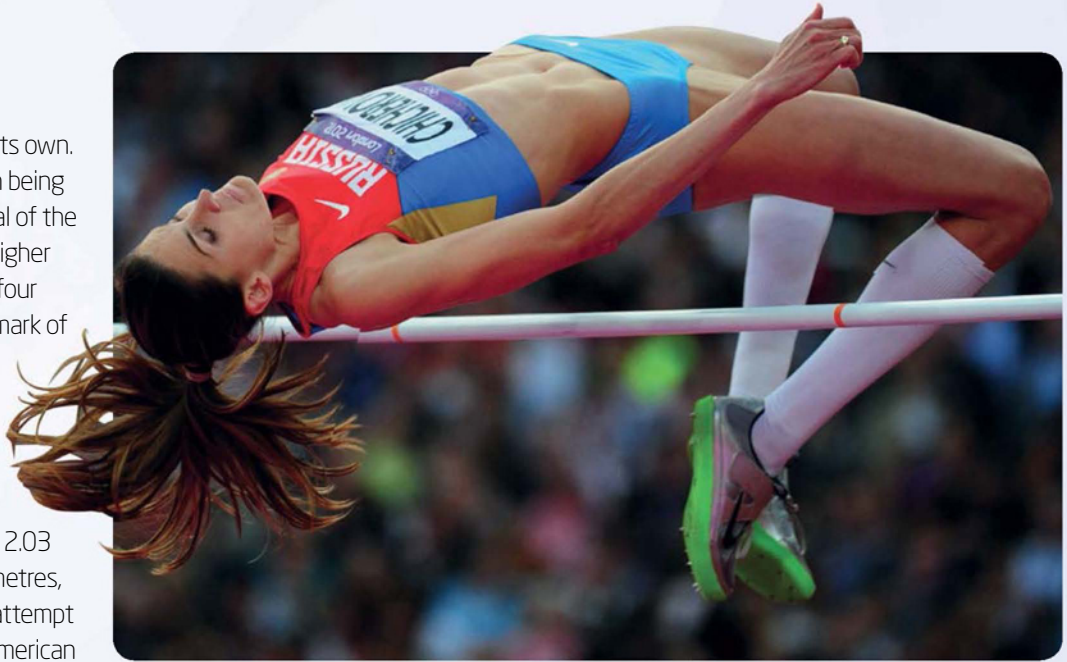
## MEYFARTH THE MIGHTY

Ulrike Meyfarth went into the record books as the youngest and then the oldest women's High Jump champion at the Games. The German's first gold medal came in 1972 at her home Games in Munich. The 16-year-old was among athletes who had already, and eagerly, adopted Dick Fosbury's technique and her enterprise saw her win the gold medal with a world record-equalling height of 1.92 metres. After that her career went into decline, but in 1982 she returned to set a new world record (2.02m), becoming European champion for good measure. The absence of Soviet bloc competitors at Los Angeles 1984 enabled Meyfarth to reclaim her title 12 years on, this time as the oldest woman ever to win the High Jump (28 years 98 days).



## CHICHEROVA ON A HIGH

The high jump has a fascination all of its own. No equipment is needed, just a human being reaching for the sky. The women's final of the High Jump at London 2012 was of a higher all-round quality than the men's, with four athletes clearing 2 metres, the benchmark of 'world class' in the event. The reigning world champion was Anna Chicherova of the Russian Federation, and she was in the heart of the battle. She was the only competitor clear at the first attempt at all heights through to 2.03 metres. After her first failure at 2.05 metres, Chicherova's clearance at the second attempt was enough to secure gold, as both American Brigetta Barrett and Chicherova's team-mate Svetlana Shkolina both failed to achieve a clearance in three attempts at that height.

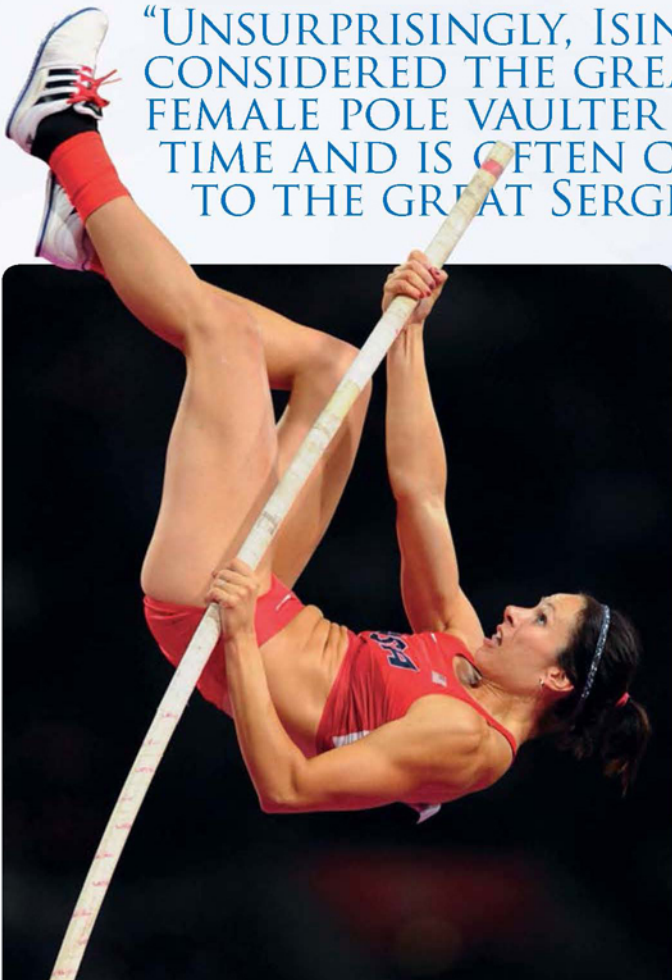


↑ Russian Federation's 2011 world champion Anna Chicherova was again the best and most consistent in the field of the women's High Jump at London 2012, winning the gold medal with the only clearance at 2.05 metres.

## ISINBAYEVA: GOLD AFTER GOLD

Yelena Isinbayeva is regarded as the golden girl of athletics in the modern era. She is a two-time gold medallist in the women's Pole Vault at the Games, has been world champion on three occasions and has broken the world record (indoors and outdoors) on 27 occasions, with her current mark set at 5.06 metres. Unsurprisingly, she is considered the greatest female pole vaulter of all time and is often compared to the great Sergey Bubka, who dominated the men's event.

**"UNSURPRISINGLY, ISINBAYEVA IS CONSIDERED THE GREATEST FEMALE POLE VAULTER OF ALL TIME AND IS OFTEN COMPARED TO THE GREAT SERGEY BUBKA"**



## WOMEN ON POLE

The men's Pole Vault competition has been a part of the modern Games programme since Athens 1896. However, women's competitive pole vaulting is a relatively new phenomenon and the first world record was only recognised by the IAAF as recently as 1992. The first-ever women's Pole Vault competition at the Games was contested at Sydney 2000 (and was won by the USA's Stacy Dragila). Russia's Yelena Isinbayeva, the only woman to exceed 5 metres, dominated the event at both the 2004 and 2008 Games.

## SUHR MAKES SURE

London's weather is variable and in the summer of 2012 never was the phenomenon seen more than during the Olympic fortnight, where daytime temperatures swung from 12 to 32 degrees, clear skies to intense cloud, sunshine to rain and from still to windy conditions. A strong headwind is not ideal for pole vaulters, but that is what the women faced for their final. Only four cleared a modest 4.55 metres and the winning height was just 4.75 metres. American Jennifer Suhr emerged victorious after just three successful leaps and three failures at 4.80 metres. It was good enough for gold on count back, due to fewer misses. This was not a vintage competition, but for Suhr the gold medal was all that mattered.

← Jennifer Suhr battled unhelpful weather conditions and adapted better than all her rivals to win the women's Pole Vault final at London 2012.



# WOMEN'S LONG JUMP AND TRIPLE JUMP

The women's Long Jump has been part of the Games since London 1948 and in all that time no woman has been able to retain her title. The women's Triple Jump was staged for the first time at Sydney 2000.

## KICK-START FOR NIGER

Chioma Ajunwa set the standard for female athletes across Africa in 1996 when she became the first African woman to win an Olympic gold medal in a field event. Ajunwa had already represented Nigeria at football, but it was her success in the women's Long Jump at Atlanta 1996 that ultimately led to the police officer being made a Member of the Order of Niger. In the final, she jumped 7.12 metres to secure gold – as well as a chieftaincy title from her home state, Imo.

## DOMINANT DRECHSLER

East Germany's Heike Drechsler was a name to fear in women's Long Jump or sprint races across three decades. During 1986, she twice equalled the women's 200m world record, but is perhaps best remembered for her Long Jump exploits. Drechsler is the only athlete to have won two women's Long Jump gold medals at the Games and, in 1983, she became the inaugural world champion. Her first gold medal came at Barcelona 1992; that same year Drechsler jumped 7.63 metres at altitude in Sestriere, a distance 11 centimetres further than the current world record. She won a second gold medal at Sydney 2000, at which point it was claimed she had won more than 400 Long Jump competitions with jumps over 7 metres.

↓ *Heike Drechsler leaps to women's Long Jump gold at Sydney 2000. Following her win in 1992, she is the event's only two-time winner.*



↑ *Mary Rand won the women's Long Jump at Tokyo 1964 to become Britain's first female track-and-field gold medallist.*

## THE GIFTED MARY RAND

Great Britain's women have a long and successful history in track-and-field events at the Games. It all started with Mary Rand, who took the gold medal in the women's Long Jump competition at Tokyo 1964. A successful pentathlete, Rand had disappointed in the women's Long Jump at Rome 1960, finishing ninth, but four years later in Tokyo, she jumped 6.52 metres in the qualifying round to set a new Games record. In the final, Rand broke the world record again with a leap of 6.76m to secure gold and followed up with a silver medal in the Pentathlon and a bronze in the women's 4 x 100m Relay. Her room-mate Ann Packer, who won the women's 800m gold medal in Tokyo, later paid tribute to Rand: 'Mary was the most gifted athlete I ever saw. She was as good as athletes get; there has never been anything like her since. And I don't believe there ever will.'

## LEBEDEVA'S LONG WAIT

At Athens 2004, Russian athlete Tatyana Lebedeva went into the women's Long Jump final with a frustrating succession of Olympic Games silver and bronze medals behind her. She had already twice been a triple jump world champion, but now she had been thwarted three times in her bid for Olympic Games gold after being hot favourite for that event. In Greece, fortunately, compensation was at hand in the women's Long Jump. Her leap of 7.07 metres took her to the gold medal by a slim margin of two centimetres, ahead of her Russian team-mates Irina Simagina and Tatyana Kotova. It is the only time the event has seen a clean sweep of the medals by one nation.



## REESE ALL CLEAR

The halcyon days of the Long Jump at the Olympic Games, when Jackie Joyner-Kersey, Heike Drechsler and Galina Chistyakova battled to be queen of the sand with consistent seven-metre leaps, are long gone, but there was a spark that something big may be around the corner following Brittney Reese's progress to the gold medal at London 2012. Reese, the two-time world champion both indoors and out, failed to pass the magic seven-metre mark in finishing fifth at Beijing 2008, but she made a mark that no one else could match in the first round at London 2012 with a 7.12-metre effort. This was just 40 centimetres off Chistyakova's 24-year-old world record.

↓ *Brittney Reese had only two legal leaps in the women's Long Jump final at London 2012, but her second-round effort brought her gold.*



**“WILLIAMS ALSO WON GOLD MEDALS IN THE DISCUS AND JAVELIN AT THE 1954 COMMONWEALTH GAMES”**

## GOLDEN KIWI YVETTE

Yvette Williams became a national heroine in New Zealand when she became the first woman from her nation to win a gold medal at the Games. Williams's triumph came in the women's Long Jump at Helsinki 1952. She had already won a Commonwealth Games gold medal two years earlier in the same event and would repeat that feat in 1954. A gifted athlete, Williams also won gold medals in the discus and javelin competitions at the 1954 Commonwealth Games in Vancouver and was inducted into the New Zealand Hall of Fame in 1990.

## NEW JUMP ON THE BLOCK

While the women's Long Jump has a long and storied history, the women's Triple Jump is a relatively recent innovation in the world of track and field. In fact, the first world record in women's Triple Jump was only recognised by the IAAF in 1991. The first major star of the sport was Ukrainian Inessa Kravets, the current world record holder and inaugural Olympic Games champion. Kravets leapt to prominence at the 1995 World Championships, during which Jonathan Edwards, the men's world champion, offered her inspiration. 'After two jumps [in which she had fouled] I thought about Edwards,' said Kravets later. 'I had been carrying around a picture of him, I thought to myself, "I should do the same as him"' – and she did, promptly won the championship and setting a phenomenal world record of 15.50 metres in the process. The following year, Kravets won the gold medal at Atlanta 1996, with a leap of 15.33m, an astounding feat which remains a Games record to this day.

## RYPAKOVA PREVAILS

The women's Triple Jump was the domain of veteran athletes at London 2012. Both Tatyana Lebedeva and Yamilé Aldama were competing at ages nearer 40 than 30, but it was the relative youngster, 27-year-old Olga Rypakova, who clinched gold for Kazakhstan after an exciting final. Rypakova took the lead in the first round with a 14.54-metre effort, but the response was swift, with Ukraine's Hanna Knyazyeva edging ahead in the second round by two centimetres. In the third round, Colombian Caterine Ibarguen made a mark of 14.67 metres, but Rypakova regained the lead shortly afterwards with 14.98 metres. It proved to be the winning performance. The standard was not on a par with previous major championships, but the former heptathlete had displayed her competitive instincts when it mattered. Aldama, who turned 40 nine days after the final, was fifth, and 36-year-old Lebedeva finished tenth.

↓ *Olga Rypkova won the women's Triple Jump final at London 2012 with a gigantic leap of 14.98 metres in the third round.*





# WOMEN'S DISCUS AND HAMMER

The women's Discus Throw is one of four events to have been contested by women at every Olympic Games since Amsterdam 1928. Conversely, the women's Hammer Throw is a relatively new event - only staged at the Games since Sydney 2000.

## PRESCRIPTION FOR SUCCESS

Aksana Miankova's hopes of competing at the Olympic Games could have been dashed in her formative years. The Beijing 2008 gold medallist came from a family of doctors in Belarus, and such was her mother's disapproval of her daughter's athletic aspirations that Miankova had to attend training while her mother was at work. She was introduced to the hammer aged 15 and began to win regional titles before stepping into international competition. Her crowning moments came in 2008, when first she achieved her personal best throw of 77.32 metres and then, in Beijing, won the gold medal with a Games-record throw of 76.34m.

## DISCUS DELIGHT

Only East German Evelin Jahl has won successive women's Discus Throw titles at the Games. She beat Faina Melnyk at Montreal 1976 and at Moscow 1980.

## LOST CENTURY

The men's Hammer Throw contest has been contested since the 1900 Games, but it took another 100 years before a women's competition was established. The IAAF started to ratify women's marks only from 1995, and the first major event was the 1999 World Championships, with Sydney playing host to the first Olympic Games competition a year later.



## RENAISSANCE GIRL

The lineage of French athlete Micheline Ostermeyer initially suggested that she might be artistically inclined. The great-niece of author Victor Hugo was also the niece of composer Lucien Paroche, so, unsurprisingly, Ostermeyer's formative years were spent playing the piano. However, the outbreak of the Second World

War saw Ostermeyer return to her family home in Tunisia, where she began to participate in sports. On returning to France, she became a formidable athlete, and at London 1948 won the women's Shot Put and the Discus Throw - having only picked up a discus for the first time a few weeks before. Afterwards, at the French base, she provided her team-mates with an impromptu performance of piano music by Beethoven.

↑ *Micheline Ostermeyer won women's Discus Throw gold at London 1948.*



↑ *Nina Ponomaryova won women's Discus Throw gold at Helsinki 1952.*

## SOVIET STARTER

Nina Ponomaryova's story is a remarkable tale of glory in an era of heightened world tension. Ponomaryova competed at four Olympic Games, twice winning the gold medal in the women's Discus Throw. However, her gold medal at Helsinki 1952, at which she set a new Games record of 51.42 metres, has the distinction of being the first gold medal for any Soviet athlete. It was the first time her country had competed at the Games since 1912. Her huge strength and fitness earned her the nickname the 'Iron Lady'. She followed up with a second gold medal at Rome 1960. Ponomaryova's rise to prominence was remarkable given that she lived in one of Stalin's gulags until the age of six, when her parents moved to a Cossack village in southern Russia.

## PRIZE POLE

Halina Konopacka's success in the first women's Discus Throw event at the Games, at Amsterdam 1928, made her Poland's first Olympic Games champion. This was the first women's gold-winning track-and-field event in the Olympic Games and Konopacka broke her own world record with a throw of 39.62 metres. After she retired from sport, Konopacka became a renowned poet and painter, releasing a collection of poems in 1929 called *Someday*. She later moved to the United States, became a member of the Board of the International Women's Sports Federation and played a role in the Polish Olympic Movement.



## RUSSIAN'S REVIVAL

Although she had set no fewer than nine world records prior to the 2004 Games in Athens, Russia's Olga Kuzenkova was in danger of becoming a nearly woman in the hammer competition, having collected silver medals at three World Championships and filling the same position at Sydney 2000. Seven years before, she had become the first woman to throw over 70 metres, but her best form had deserted her since 1999. The 2004 Games saw Kuzenkova return to prominence with a vengeance: leading the competition throughout, she won the gold medal with a distance of 75.02m – a new Games record.

## OUT OF REACH

Cuban hammer thrower Yipsi González was twice world champion, but glory at the Olympic Games escaped her. Gonzalez won her first world title in 2001 and successfully defended it two years later, which led to her being named Cuban Sportswoman of the Year for 2003. The following year, in the run-up to Athens 2004, she threw the longest throw recorded that year, making her the favourite to win the gold medal. In the event, however, she disappointed with four fouls and her best throw of 73.36 metres was only good enough for silver. At Beijing 2008, González again came close, winning a second silver medal behind Aksana Miankova – who set a new Games record.

**“IN THE RUN-UP TO ATHENS 2004, GONZÁLEZ THREW THE LONGEST THROW RECORDED THAT YEAR”**

## LYSENKO BACK WITH A BANG

Tatyana Lysenko missed the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, but the former world record holder proved a force back on the Olympic stage at London 2012. To prove a point, the Russian Federation thrower opened her competition in the women's Hammer Throw by breaking the Olympic record, set at Beijing 2008, with 77.56 metres. She held onto her lead and ensured victory by throwing 62 centimetres further in round five with a throw of 78.18 metres. Lysenko had first set a world best in 2005, and her gold-medal throw was only 1.24 metres short of Betty Heidler's world record set in 2011.

➔ *Tatyana Lysenko broke the Olympic record with a monstrous 78.18-metre effort in the Hammer Throw final at London 2012.*



## SHARING THE GLORY

Sandra Perkovic's gold medal-winning performance in the women's Discus Throw was greeted warmly by the London 2012 crowd. The Croatian benefited from the all-enveloping feel-good factor in the Olympic Stadium on the middle Saturday, when her own triumph was sandwiched between the glories of three British gold medals. Not that Perkovic minded. She celebrated with a smile as wide as all the other winners that night, happy also that she had won with a winning throw of 69.11 metres, which was also a national record. The Russian Federation's silver medallist, Darya Pishchalnikova, could not match her world-leading 2012 effort of beyond 70 metres set at her national championships.

↩ *Croatia collected six medals from six different sports at London 2012, including Sandra Perkovic's gold in the women's Discus Throw.*



# WOMEN'S SHOT PUT AND JAVELIN

Two of the more established events on the women's Athletics programme, women's Javelin Throw and Shot Put have been staged since Los Angeles 1932 and London 1948 respectively. Both disciplines have been largely dominated by Eastern European athletes over the years.



## TALENTED BABE

The women's Javelin Throw was contested at the Games for the first time at Los Angeles 1932. The first winner was fittingly an American, Mildred 'Babe' Didrikson, who threw 43.69 metres to claim gold. She then went on to achieve a second success in the women's 80m Hurdles. This, however, represents only a fraction of her achievements: Didrikson reached All-American status at basketball, played organised baseball and softball, was an expert diver, roller skater and bowler and even recorded records as a singer and harmonica player. Outside the Olympic Games, however, Didrikson's main exploits were in golf. Having been denied amateur status, she competed against the men in the Los Angeles Open – a PGA event – in 1938. No woman would repeat this for another 60 years. 'The Babe' was named the tenth Greatest North American Athlete of the 20th Century by ESPN, and the ninth Greatest Athlete of the 20th Century by the Associated Press.

🏹 A woman of many talents, Babe Didrikson won women's Javelin Throw gold at the 1932 Games.

## SANDERSON V WHITBREAD...

Tessa Sanderson reached the pinnacle of her long Javelin career with a gold-medal performance at the 1984 Games in Los Angeles. The Jamaican-born British athlete unexpectedly beat her compatriot Fatima Whitbread to become the first black British woman to win gold at the Games. Her success came at the half-way point of her career and she went on to become only the second track-and-field athlete in history to compete at six Games, from Montreal 1976 to Atlanta 1996. Sanderson was vice-chairman of Sport England for six years and is a current Board member of the Olympic Park Legacy Company, overseeing the long-term benefits of the 2012 Games.



⬆ East Germany's Ruth Fuchs defended her Olympic title with a throw of 65.94 metres at Montreal 1976.

## GALE FORCE FUCHS

Only two women have made a successful defence of their titles in women's Javelin Throw at the Games, the first being East German Ruth Fuchs. During the 1970s, Fuchs broke the world record an astounding six times, but her defining moments came at the 1972 and 1976 Games. She later became a Member of Parliament in the unified Germany.

**"DURING THE 1970s, RUTH FUCHS BROKE THE WORLD RECORD AN ASTOUNDING SIX TIMES"**

## WINNING WORDS

At the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki, Czechoslovak javelin thrower Dana Zátopková was as formidable a character in her press conferences as she was a competitor. Remarkably, her husband, Emil Zátopek, won men's 5000m gold barely an hour before she won the women's Javelin Throw competition with a throw of 50.47m. At the press conference that ensued, Emil suggested his victory had inspired his wife, to which she replied, 'Really? OK, go inspire some other girl and see if she throws a javelin 50 metres!' In 1958, she became the oldest woman (at 35) to set a world record, with a throw of 55.73m, and two years later won a silver medal at the Olympic Games in Rome.



## WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES

New Zealander Valerie Adams is a novelty in her event. Shot Put has a reputation of being a European domain and the facts bear that out. Adams, who won the event at Beijing 2008 as Valerie Vili, is one of only two non-Europeans to win this particular gold. She confirmed her status with world titles in 2009 and 2011. At London 2012, Adams took the lead in the women's Shot Put with her first throw (20.61 metres) only to be overtaken by Nadezeya Ostapchuk of Belarus. Adams learned, only the day after the Closing Ceremony, that she had been promoted to gold after Ostapchuk was disqualified by order of the International Olympic Committee having failed a doping control test.

➔ Valerie Adams successfully defended her Olympic Shot Put title at London 2012, but only after the original winner failed a doping test.



## SIX OF THE BEST

Soviet athlete Natalya Lisovskaya is almost certainly the greatest shot-putter in the history of the sport. She set the first of her world records in 1984, aged 21, with a throw of 22.53 metres. Her mark of 22.63 metres in 1987 remains the world record, but perhaps the clearest demonstration of her dominance came at Seoul 1988. Lisovskaya didn't just win the gold medal, but also every one of her six throws was good enough to have won the competition outright.

## EASTERN EFFORT

For over two decades, Soviet bloc countries dominated the women's Shot Put event at the Olympic Games. The most prominent was Nadezhda Chizhova of the Soviet Union, who won three consecutive titles between 1968 and 1976. In a glittering career, Chizhova also set seven world records and became the first woman in the event to break both the 20-metre and 21-metre barriers.

## KIWI CROWNING

When Valerie Vili threw 20.56m in the women's Shot Put final at Beijing 2008, she won New Zealand's first track-and-field gold medal since John Walker won the men's 1500m in 1976. Vili received the 2008 New Zealand Sports Award for her success and was crowned world champion in 2009.

## PETRA'S UNBEATABLE JAVELIN THROW

Petra Felke ensured East German continuity in the javelin, in the wake of Ruth Fuchs. Felke's career saw her break the world record on four occasions, most notably with a throw of 80.00 metres in 1988. Her throw remains in the record books, as the design of the javelin was changed in 1999 for safety reasons to ensure it could not be thrown as far again, putting other athletes or the crowd at risk. A few weeks after setting her world record, Felke won the gold medal at the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, with the luckless Fatima Whitbread picking up silver.



## SPOTAKOVA'S SPECIAL DELIVERY

Success breeds success and Czech javelin-throwing has been riding a wave of triumph ever since Jan Zelezny was breaking records and regularly picking up gold medals in this dramatic throwing event. The heiress to the great Zelezny's throne is Barbara Spotakova, who came to London 2012 as the defending Olympic champion and world record holder in the women's javelin. Spotakova took the lead with her first throw of the competition, 66.90 metres, a position she would not relinquish. With her second and third efforts Spotakova peppered the 66-metre mark without improving. In round four she unleashed a 69.55-metre throw, the best in the world in 2012, and that was that. The favourite had justified her standing; over four metres (a chasm at this level) separated her from silver medallist Christina Obergföll of Germany.

➔ The Czech Republic's long tradition of success in the Javelin Throw was continued by Barbara Spotakova in the women's event at London 2012.



# BALL SPORTS

The range of ball sports featured at the Olympics demonstrates the variety of sporting excellence showcased at the Games







🏐 Jennifer Kessy (right) tips to ball over the net as Kerri Walsh Jennings defends during the women's Beach Volleyball final at London 2012. The all-United States final saw Walsh Jennings and Misty May-Treanor prevail over Kessy and April Ross in two sets.



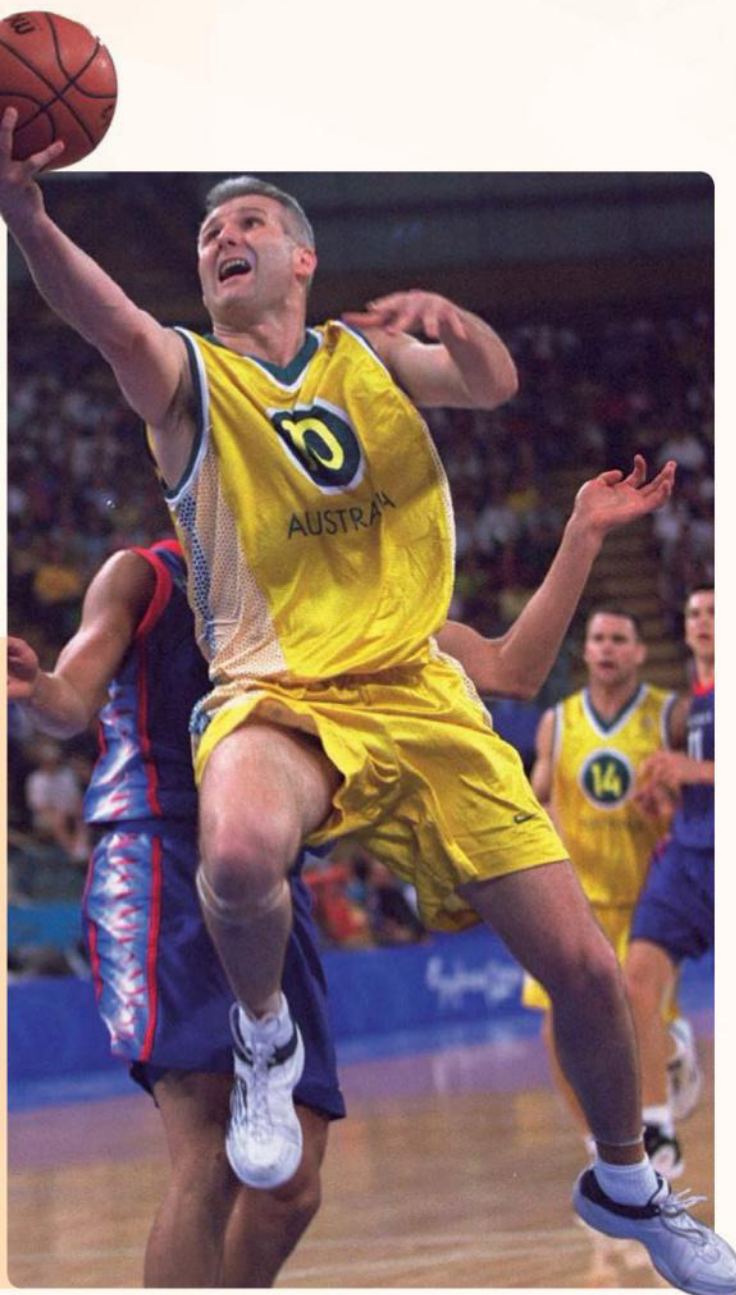
# BASKETBALL

Men's basketball was contested for the first time at Berlin 1936, with the United States beating Canada (19-8) in the final. It was a sign of things to come: the United States have been the event's dominant team, winning gold on 13 (out of 16) occasions. It has been a similar story in women's Basketball, with the United States winning five of the seven tournaments contested since 1976.

## SCHMIDT, GAZE AND CRUZ

Only three men have played Basketball at five different Games – and two of them lead the overall rankings for points scored. Brazil's Oscar Schmidt scored 1,093 points in 1980, 1984, 1988, 1992 and 1996, and his average of 28.8 per match is also a record. Second is Australia's Andrew Gaze, with 789 points spread across 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996 and 2000 – he also had the honour of carrying the host nation's flag at Sydney 2000's Opening Ceremony. His father, Lindsey Gaze, had played Basketball for Australia at the 1960, 1964 and 1968 Games and coached the team in 1972, 1976, 1980 and 1984. Puerto Rico's Teofilo Cruz was not only the first Basketball player, but also the first athlete in any team sport, to compete at five Olympic Games (1960, 1964, 1968, 1972 and 1976).

➔ *Australia's Andrew Gaze in action against Russia at his record-equalling fifth-and-final Games at Sydney in 2000.*



## UNDYING HURT

After seven consecutive gold medals and an unblemished record in 63 matches, the first United States Basketball team to be denied the top prize at an Olympic Games felt so devastated by their 51-50 defeat to the USSR that they refused to accept the silver medals they were due. More than four decades on from the dramatic final at Munich in 1972, the silver medals still remain in the possession of the International Olympic Committee, unclaimed.

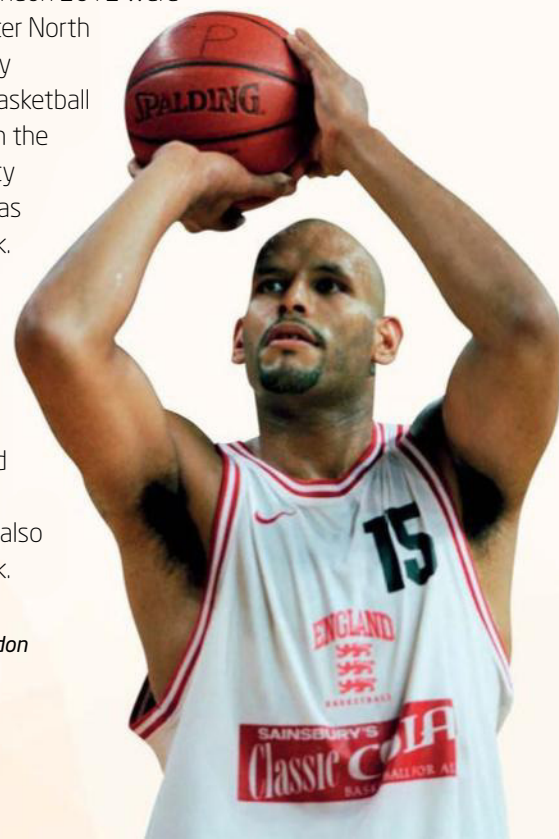
➔ *The tip-off at the 1972 Olympic Games Basketball final that saw the United States lose for the first time.*



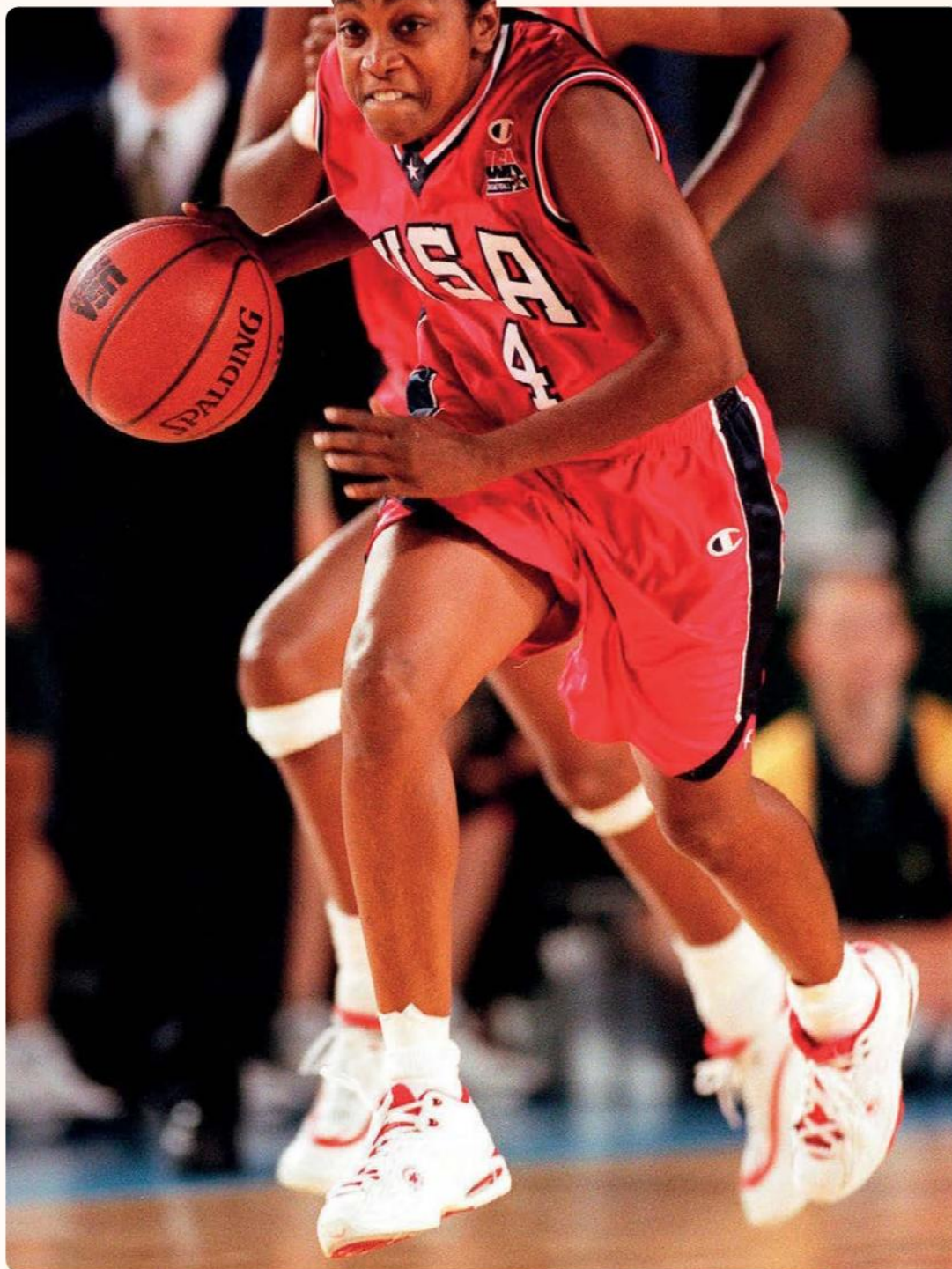
## MOVING HOMES

The Basketball finals at London 2012 were played at the 20,000-seater North Greenwich Arena. The early qualifying rounds of the Basketball tournament were played in the temporary 12,000-capacity Basketball Arena, which was located in the Olympic Park. Once Basketball moved to Greenwich, the Basketball Arena became home to the men's and women's Handball finals, the earlier rounds of which had been staged at the 7,000-seater Copper Box, also located in the Olympic Park.

➔ *Former NBA star John Amoechi was part of the London 2012 bidding team.*







### FIVE GAMES, FOUR GOLDS

Teresa Edwards became the first and, to date, only female basketball player to compete at five different Games, when she won a gold medal with the United States team at Sydney 2000. She also won golds in 1984, 1988 and 1996, and a solitary bronze in 1992. The triumph in 1984, when aged 20, made her the youngest woman to win a Basketball gold medal at the Games – and the 2000 success made her the oldest, at 36.

← *Teresa Edwards is the only woman to play at five different Games.*

“IN ADDITION TO HER GOLD IN SYDNEY, EDWARDS ALSO WON GOLDS IN 1984, 1988 AND 1996, AS WELL AS A BRONZE IN 1992”

### AMERICAN DREAM

‘Like Elvis and the Beatles put together’ was how US Basketball coach Chuck Daly described the excitement and impact of his country’s so-called ‘Dream Team’ at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona. A change in the rules made three years earlier meant that this was the first Games at which professional players were allowed to compete. Household names such as Earvin ‘Magic’ Johnson, Michael Jordan and Larry Byrd starred in a scintillating side whose average winning margin was as high as 43.8 points. The final against Croatia was their tightest game of the tournament – and yet they still cruised to a 117–85 win ... a margin of 32 points.

### DREAM ON

The latest version of the ‘Dream Team’ brought gold home to the United States in the men’s Basketball at London 2012, but their victory over Spain, in a rematch of the Beijing 2008 final, was anything but a points procession. Spain lost, in the end, by 107–100 in front of a thrilled 20,000 crowd at North Greenwich Arena. Kevin Durant, with 30 points, led the way for the Americans, supported by Kobe Bryant and LeBron James. They had been only 83–82 ahead going into the fourth quarter. Pau Gasol, who had won two NBA titles as a team-mate of Bryant at the Los Angeles Lakers, inspired a far tougher challenge than any before to the USA, who had won all their previous seven matches by an average margin of 35 points.



## SEVEN-UP FOR AMERICANS

American women have proved even more dominant in Olympic Basketball in the 21st century than their male counterparts. Their 85–50 crushing of France in the final at London 2012 secured their fifth gold medal in a row and seventh in all since the discipline entered the Games at Montreal 1976. The USA had constructed a decisive 12-point lead by halftime and then added a further 19 points without reply in the third quarter against a French side who were appearing in the final for the first time. Candace Parker fulfilled a personal golden dream in scoring 21 points while Sandrine Gruda and Edwige Lawson-Wade claimed 12 points each for France. Australia claimed the bronze following an 83–74 victory over Russia, successors to the Soviet winners from Montreal 1976, Moscow 1980 and Barcelona 1992.

➔ Kobe Bryant (10) soars to the basket during the United States' 107–100 defeat of Spain in the men's Basketball final at London 2012.









# FOOTBALL

The FIFA World Cup is the only rival the Olympic Games has for the title of the world's pre-eminent sporting event. While most footballers regard the World Cup as their sport's top prize, the Olympic Games Football tournament has achieved its own niche after introducing a new rule in 1992, limiting the tournament to under-23s except for three over-age players per squad.

## FAR, FAR AWAY...

Los Angeles may have been the official Host City for the 1984 Games, but the Football tournament was played in two venues situated more than 3,200 kilometres away: the Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium in Annapolis, Maryland; and the Harvard Stadium in Boston, Massachusetts.

## FUTURE GENERATIONS

Many players who have appeared in the Football tournament at the Olympic Games have gone on to become FIFA World Cup winners, including: Brazil's Dunga, Taffarel, Bebeto, Romario, Ronaldo and Roberto Carlos; Italy's Fabio Cannavaro, Andrea Pirlo, Daniele De Rossi and Gianluigi Buffon; France's Patrick Vieira; West Germany's Andreas Brehme and Jürgen Klinsmann; and Spain's Xavi Hernandez and Carles Puyol.

## AFRICA CALLING

An injury-time winner by Emmanuel Amunike not only gave Nigeria victory over Argentina in their 1996 final showdown, but also secured Africa's first Football gold at the Games. Four years earlier, Ghana had finished third to become the continent's first Football medallists.

↓ *Celebration time for Nigeria after they beat Argentina 3-2 in the 1996 final.*



## PIONEERING CHAMPIONS

Before the first FIFA World Cup was held in 1930, the four-yearly Olympic Games Football tournament was considered an equivalent world championship. Uruguay, who would both host and win the 1930 World Cup, went into the tournament having clinched Football gold both at the 1924 and 1928 Games. José Nasazzi, José Andrade, Hector Scarone and Pedro Petrone played in all three winning teams.

↓ *Uruguay's 1928 gold medal-winning team line up before the final.*



“URUGUAY, WERE TWICE EARLY WINNERS OF THE OLYMPIC COMPETITION”

## WATER WORKS

Unusually, two breaks for water were allowed during the Football final between Argentina and Nigeria at the 2008 Games, played on a baking hot afternoon in Beijing's Bird's Nest Stadium. With the temperature at 42° Celsius, the Argentina side, including Lionel Messi and winning goal-scorer Angel Di Maria, ultimately prevailed, winning 1-0 for the country's second-successive Football gold medal.

➔ *Argentina's Lionel Messi takes a water break during the 2008 final against Nigeria.*







## PROLIFIC WOMEN

Women's Football was introduced at the 1996 Games in Atlanta – and the United States have won four of the five tournaments held, finishing runners-up only at Sydney 2000. Brazil, like their men's team, have never won an Olympic gold medal, despite having some outstanding players. They reached the semi-finals in every one of the first four tournaments, but lost in the final at both Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008. Brazil's brightest stars have been Cristiane and Marta, the latter five-times FIFA Women's World Player of the Year. Cristiane is the all-time leading scorer in women's Football at the Olympic Games with a total of 12 goals to her name.

← Joy Fawcett (left) and Carin Gabarra celebrate the United States' victory in the final at Atlanta 1996.

**“FOOTBALL CROWDS TOTALLED A QUARTER OF LONDON 2012 ATTENDANCES”**

## USA BANK ON LLOYD

The United States won their fourth women's Olympic Football title in their fifth final at London 2012 and, in doing so, avenged their defeat by Japan in the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup final. Experienced goalkeeper Hope Solo played a key role in securing a 2–1 win, but midfielder Carli Lloyd played the most decisive role. Lloyd had scored the Americans' extra-time winner in the gold-medal game victory over Brazil at Beijing 2008, but then missed a penalty in the shoot-out defeat by Japan in the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup final. At Wembley, in front of a European women's record crowd of 80,203, she scored both USA goals. Canada, who had beaten debutantes Great Britain in the quarter-final, took the bronze medal after defeating France 1–0.

➔ Carli Lloyd stoops to head home the United States' first goal as they beat Japan 2–1 to win the gold medal at London 2012.



## BRAZIL STILL WAITING

Olympic gold continued to elude Brazil in the men's tournament at London 2012, as the favourites – featuring many of the stars expected to lead their FIFA World Cup bid in 2014 – lost 2–1 to Mexico at Wembley Stadium. Football attendances totalled a quarter of the London 2012 aggregate, and a crowd of 86,162 saw the Mexicans seize control with goals in each half from forward Oribe Peralta. Mexico thus won their first Olympic Football gold, while Brazil salvaged 'only' a third silver. They have also won bronze twice. Great Britain, appearing at the Olympic Games in the event for the first time in 52 years, had been knocked out in the quarter-finals by the Republic of Korea, who went on to win bronze, beating Japan 2–0 at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium.



# HOCKEY

One of the oldest team sports on the Games roster, men's Hockey has been played at every Olympiad since London 1908 (bar 1912 and 1924). India were the event's early powerhouses, winning six consecutive gold medals between 1928 and 1956, although their dominance waned with the advent of astroturf pitches at Montreal 1976. Women's Hockey has been contested since Moscow 1980 and Australia have been the event's most successful team, with three victories.

## OUT ... AND IN

Men's Hockey was removed from the Games schedule at Paris 1924 owing to the lack of an international sporting structure. This led to the formation of the International Hockey Federation, and the sport became a permanent feature from 1928 onwards.

## INDIA AND PAKISTAN

The roots of hockey stretch back 4,000 years to 'stick-and-ball' games in Egypt. The sport first appeared at the Olympic Games with a men's competition at London 1908, since when it has featured at every Games except for those of 1912 and 1924. Hockey was dominated by India and Pakistan, where the sport is followed most fanatically, until the 1970s. India won all six gold medals at the Games from 1928 to 1956 and either they or Pakistan continued to be the teams to beat until 1972, when hosts West Germany took gold. Even since then India and Pakistan have never failed to qualify for a men's Hockey competition at the Games, although Pakistan boycotted Moscow 1980. The two countries' relative demise may be connected, as some believe, with the switch to artificial turf at the 1976 Games in Montreal, but India still managed to take gold again four years later and Pakistan four years after that. Women's Hockey first appeared on the Olympic Games programme at Moscow 1980, with Zimbabwe snatching a surprise gold.

↓ *England on the attack during their 8-1 victory over Ireland in the first-ever men's Hockey final in 1908.*



## WOMEN UNDER WAY

Women's Hockey became a full-medal sport at the Olympic Games at Moscow 1980 (some 72 years after the men's Hockey competition had made its first appearance at the Games), but the outcome was one that few predicted as Zimbabwe, who had not trained together as a team in the build-up to the event, snatched a surprise gold, pipping Czechoslovakia to finish top of the Championship Pool by a single point. Their victory chant was 'Forward with the rooster' – Robert Mugabe's party slogan. Their minister of sports promised each squad member a gift of an ox when they arrived home.

## HAT-TRICK HERO

Dhyan Chand is arguably the greatest player the game of hockey has ever known. He won three gold medals as a centre-forward for India at the Games of 1928, 1932 and 1936. His birthday, on 29 August, is India's national sports day.

↓ *Dhyan Chand (standing on the back row, second left) led India to men's Hockey gold at the 1928, 1932 and 1936 Olympic Games.*



## INDEPENDENT SUCCESS

In 1948, a year after gaining independence, India came to the post-war Games in London as reigning men's Hockey champions. The team had lost some players of English descent and a number of Muslims, who had moved to the new nation of Pakistan. These included Ali Dara, who in 1936 had played for India, but was Pakistan's captain in 1948. Nevertheless India reached the final, in which they beat Great Britain 4-0 to win gold. India outscored the competition in their five games, ending with a 25-2 aggregate.

## RECORD SUCCESS

The widest winning margin in a men's Hockey final at an Olympic Games was seven goals. In 1908, England beat Ireland 8-1 in London, and in 1936 India beat Germany in Berlin by the same score. The highest margin of victory in any men's Hockey match at the Games was achieved by India at the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, when they beat the United States 24-1.



## PAKISTAN BREAKTHROUGH

Pakistan ended India's streak of six straight gold medals and 30 consecutive victories by winning the 1960 men's final in Rome 1–0. India had outscored their opponents during those 30 games by 178 points to seven. The defeat ended India's streak of invincibility at the Games.

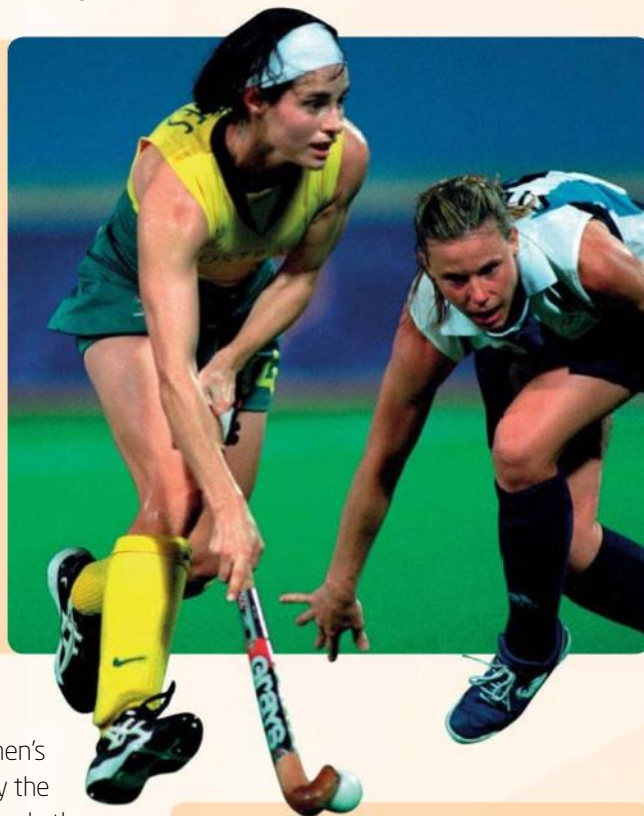
## PITCHING IN

Synthetic pitches are mandatory for all international tournaments and for most national competitions. While hockey is still played on grass fields at some local levels and in lesser national divisions, it has been replaced by synthetic turf almost everywhere in the western world. Over the years, the game has become quicker, more skilful and, with the development of new techniques, such as the Indian dribble, more exciting to watch.

## HAWKES MAKES HISTORY

Australian midfielder Rechelle Hawkes competed in the Olympic Games for the first time at Barcelona 1988 and won the first of her three women's Hockey gold medals as Australia beat the Netherlands 3–2 in the semi-finals and then hosts the Republic of Korea by 2–0 in the final. At Barcelona 1992, Hawkes experienced a contrasting low point in her career, when the Australians were upset 1–0 in the preliminaries by Spain. She then led her country back to the top at Atlanta 1996. Australia reached the final on the back of a 38-game unbeaten streak and again beat the Koreans, this time 3–1. Four years later, in Sydney, Hawkes recited the Athletes' Oath at the Opening Ceremony ... and duly ended up with another gold medal. She is the only female Hockey player to win three medals (let alone three gold medals) and the only one to win medals 12 years apart.

➔ Gold medals in 1988, 1996 and 2000 earned Rechelle Hawkes a place in the history books.



## WALSH TOUGHS IT OUT

One of the bravest displays of London 2012 came from Great Britain's women's Hockey skipper Kate Walsh. She broke her jaw in the first match, had surgery the next day and returned five days later to lead her side to Olympic bronze for only the second time in 20 years. Walsh had a plate inserted into her jaw after being struck by a stick in Team GB's opening game against Japan. She missed two subsequent matches, but led by example in the bronze-medal match, setting up two penalty corners in a 3–1 win over New Zealand. Walsh said: 'I loved every minute of being out there. I love leading this team and that's where all my thoughts were once I had fractured my jaw – on getting back. I wasn't nervous. I wanted to win that badly.'

➔ Kate Walsh (left) wore protective headgear after breaking her jaw at London 2012.



## HAT-TRICK FOR WEISE

Germany overcame a slow start to retain their Olympic men's Hockey crown at London 2012 after defeating favourites Australia 4–2 in the semi-finals and the Netherlands 2–1 in the final. The Dutch team badly missed midfielder Klaas Vermeulen, who had been injured in the semi-finals. The German victory extended the remarkable record of coach Markus Weise, who had thus won three successive gold medals, once with Germany's women's team and then twice with the men. Australia took bronze after a 3–1 win over a Great Britain team striving to regain their pride following a 9–2 defeat by the Netherlands. That had been their highest-ever defeat and a record beating in an Olympic semi-final. Fourth place was still their best finish since gold-medal success at Seoul 1988.



# VOLLEYBALL

Volleyball (in both men's and women's tournament formats) has been contested as an indoor sport at the Olympic Games since Tokyo 1964. As with so many team sports, the twin powers of the United States and former Soviet Union jointly lead the way in the men's tournament (with three gold medal wins apiece), while the latter nation are the only four-time winners in the women's event.

## TOURNAMENT FORMAT

The Volleyball tournament format at the Olympic Games originally paralleled the one still employed in the sport's World Cup. All teams played against each other and then were ranked by wins, set average and points average. One disadvantage of this round-robin system is that medal winners could be determined before the end of the games, prompting a loss of focus on the outcome of the remaining matches. To cope with this situation, the competition was split into two parts by the introduction of a knock-out phase, consisting of quarter-finals, semi-finals and final. Since its creation, at Munich 1972, this system has become the standard for the Volleyball tournament at the Games, and is usually referred to as the 'Olympic format'.

## EASTERN GLORY

The first two editions of the men's Volleyball tournament, at the Games of 1964 and 1968, were won by the Soviet Union. Four years later it was third time lucky for Japan and, in 1976, the introduction of a new offensive skill, the back-row attack, helped Poland strike gold.

➔ *The Soviet Union made a successful defence of their men's Volleyball crown at the 1968 Games in Mexico City.*

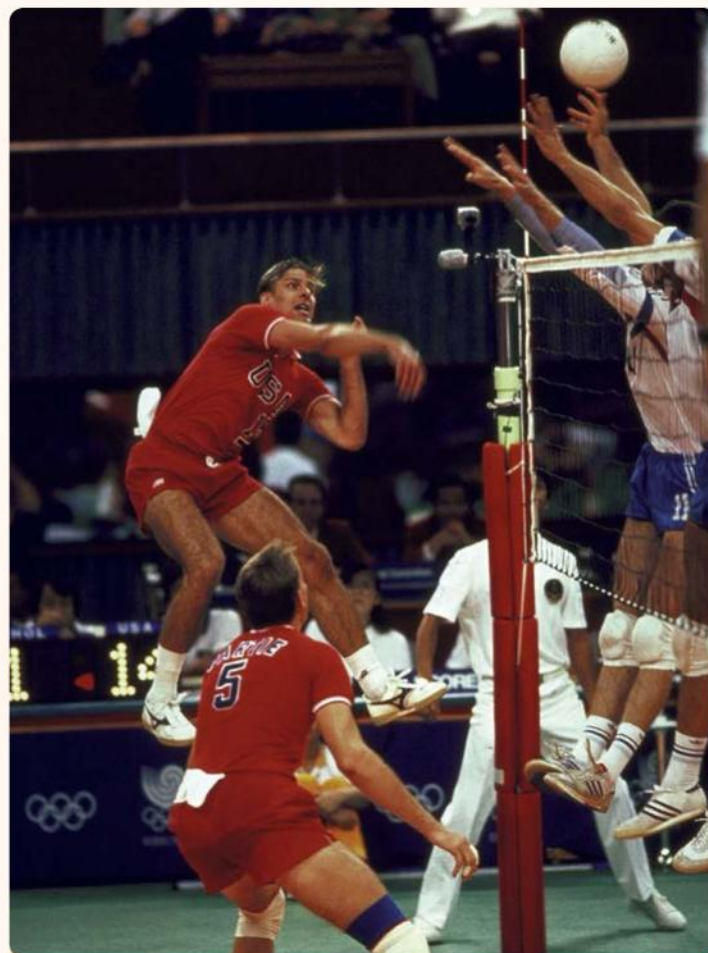


## TAKING TURNS

At Moscow 1980, many of the strongest teams belonged to the Eastern bloc, which meant that the boycott, led by the United States, did not have as great an effect on men's Volleyball as in some other sports. Not surprisingly, the Soviet Union won, beating Bulgaria 3-1 in the final. The roles were reversed in 1984, when the United States confirmed their domination of the sport in the West by sweeping past Brazil. This time the Soviets were absent.

## MORE AND MORE

The number of teams involved in the Olympic Games has grown steadily since the first men's Volleyball tournament in 1964. From 1996 onwards, both men's and women's indoor events have involved 12 nations. Each of the five continental volleyball confederations has at least one affiliated national federation involved in the Games.



↑ *Karch Kiraly shows his power at the net at the men's Volleyball tournament at Seoul 1988.*

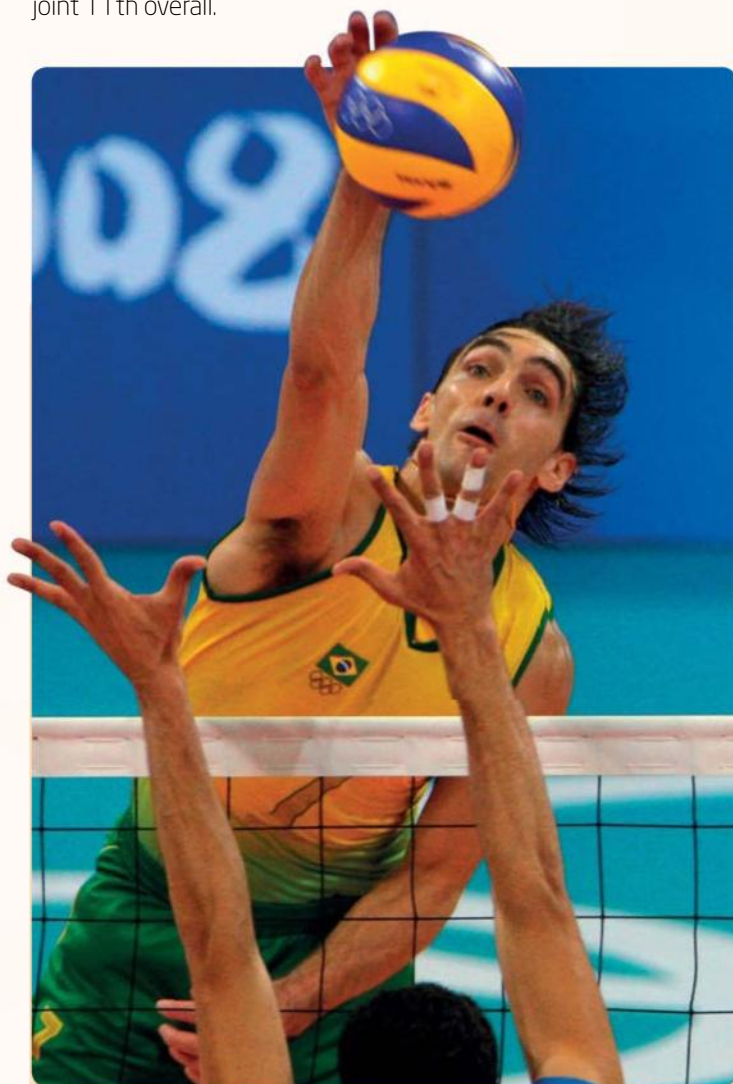
## KIRALY'S DOUBLE

'Karch' Kiraly of the United States is the only person to have won medals in both the indoor and beach versions of Volleyball at the Games. Known as the 'Thunderball in Volleyball', he was a fixture in the national team through much of the 1980s as a passer/outside hitter in the 'two-man' or 'swing hitter' serve reception system. Kiraly was in the USA teams that won gold medals at the 1984 and 1988 Games, the latter as team captain. He was also named the International Volleyball Federation's top player in the world in 1986 and 1988. In 1996, he won a gold medal in men's Beach Volleyball at the Atlanta Games. The nickname 'Karch' could be derived from the Hungarian 'Karcsi', which can be translated as 'Charlie'. It is a common derivative of Karoly, which is Charles. His last name, Kiraly, means 'King'.



## BRAZIL OUT IN FRONT

Brazil have featured in more men's Volleyball competitions at the Games than any other country, having appeared in all 13, followed by Italy and the United States, on ten each. Eleven nations have made just one appearance, the latest of them being Great Britain, who took part as the host nation in 2012. The team, then ranked 92 in the world, lost all five first-round group matches and finished joint 11th overall.



### GIBA'S THE MAN

Brazilian star Giba – full name: Gilberto Amaury de Godoy Filho – is arguably the most recognised men's Volleyball player among fans all over the world. Although he is not that tall by modern standards, at 6ft 4in, his charisma, skill and energy have more than made up for his lack of reach. After Brazil lost in the final at Beijing 2008, some volleyball fans thought their run of success had come to an end, but, in 2010, Giba led Brazil to the world title. They had to settle for the silver medal at London 2012.

↑ *The most famous name in men's volleyball, Brazil's Giba led his country to victory in every major competition in the game: eight South American Championships, three World Championships and to Olympic Games gold at Athens 2004.*



↑ *Three Brazilians leap trying to block the spike of Sergey Tetyukhin during the Russian Federation's victory in the 2012 men's Volleyball final.*

## RESILIENT RUSSIANS

A thrilling fightback after losing the first two sets saw the Russian Federation recover from the jaws of defeat to wreck Brazil's dreams of gold in the men's Volleyball final at London 2012. The Russians were twice match point down in the third set, but eventually won 3–2 to upset the favourites and world's top-ranked nation. The hero for the winners was 7ft 2in Dmitriy Muserskiy, who sparked the Russian resistance that eventually upset the Brazilians' rhythm and cohesion at the net. This was the first time a team had come back to win the final from two sets down. Russia, stronger and taller, triumphed in the deciding set by six clear points to bring a first Olympic men's Volleyball gold home to Moscow since the Soviet Union won at Moscow 1980.

## "BRAZIL SAVED SIX MATCH POINTS IN THEIR QUARTER-FINAL WIN OVER RUSSIA"

### ESCAPE TO VICTORY

Brazil's women's Volleyball team have never failed to reach the Olympic Games Volleyball semi-final since finishing sixth at Seoul 1988. They reminded everyone of their powerhouse status by defeating the United States 3–1 to retain the title they won four years earlier at Beijing 2008. The Americans, top of the world rankings, dominated the first set, but Brazil, who had saved six match points in their quarter-final win over Russia, refused to lose heart. Jacque (Jaqueline Carvalho) top-scored with 18 points as they rolled out the three subsequent sets by 25–17, 25–20 and 25–17. Victory sealed a notable revival after Brazil had teetered on the brink of early elimination following group-stage defeats by the United States and the Republic of Korea.



# BEACH VOLLEYBALL

Beach Volleyball originated in southern California and Hawaii around the 1920s, but is now popular as far afield as eastern Europe, even in countries not known for their beaches. A prime example of this is landlocked Switzerland, who won the men's Beach Volleyball bronze medal in 2004.

## TREBLING UP

Kerri Walsh and Misty May-Treanor are the only pair to make a successful defence of their Olympic Games women's Beach Volleyball title, adding the London 2012 gold medal to their successes four and eight years earlier and being named 'the greatest beach volleyball team of all time'. They beat China's Tian Jia and Wang Jie 21-18, 21-18 at Beijing 2008. The victory was also the 100th of Walsh's career and the team's 19th consecutive tournament and 108th consecutive match win. Walsh became the fastest player, man or woman, to reach the 100-win milestone, having done so in just 141 career tournaments, eclipsing even May-Treanor, who had achieved the feat in her 153rd tournament.

↓ *Misty May-Treanor (left) and Kerri Walsh (right) won Olympic Games gold medals in 2004, 2008 and 2012.*



## NEW ARRIVAL

Beach Volleyball was introduced as a demonstration event at the 1992 Olympic Games, and became a medal sport four years later. A total of 24 teams participate in each tournament. Teams qualify on the basis of their performance in FIVB events over the course of approximately 18 months leading up to the Games. There is a limit of two teams per country, one spot is reserved for the Host Country and another for a randomly chosen wildcard country. In the event that any continent is not represented, the highest ranked team from that continent also qualifies for the tournament.

## WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

At international level, the elite nations are the United States, Brazil and China. Along with Australia, they are the only winners of gold medals at the Olympic Games, in either men's or women's Beach Volleyball. The original purpose of the sport was to give bored surfers something to do when the surf was down. The major differences now between beach and indoor volleyball are that the former is played on sand instead of a hard floor and has two players per team rather than six. In addition, even when not playing competitively, when the rules require it, most players prefer to play the beach version barefoot.



↑ *Karch Kiraly took his indoor Volleyball form to the sand to help the United States to the inaugural Beach Volleyball title at Atlanta 1996.*

## KIRALY CROSSES OVER

Talk about versatility. Widely regarded as one of the best indoor men's volleyball players ever, leading the United States to gold in 1984 and 1988, 'Karch' Kiraly is considered the Michael Jordan of the sport, beating performers half his age. He has won at least one tournament in 24 of the 28 seasons he has played, spanning four different decades. He was the first person in the history of the Olympic Games to have won three men's Volleyball gold medals, but the first to have struck gold in both versions of the sport, having been part of the United States' indoor teams in 1984 and 1988 before winning on the sand in 1996 in Atlanta with Kent Steffes. Kiraly grew up in Santa Barbara, California, and learned the game from his father, Dr Laszlo Kiraly. He has claimed a title in 24 different states with 13 different partners.

## CLASS OF HIS OWN

The United States' Ron Von Hagen is regarded as the Babe Ruth of men's beach volleyball. Von Hagen established standards and set records at a time when the sport was just beginning. He played in 54 tournaments from 1966 to 1972, never finishing lower than third place in any tournament he entered.



## DEPRESSION DRIVEN

The sport was given a boost in the United States by the Great Depression of the 1930s. Starved of cash, Americans flocked to the beaches in their hundreds to take part in what was virtually a no-cost pastime and a free source of entertainment. It was only a matter of time before the International Volleyball Federation had to recognise the sport. That breakthrough came in 1986.

## NO STROLL ACROSS THE SAND

Beach Volleyball is one of the most spectacular of Olympic sports for spectators, with players throwing themselves around the court to keep the ball in play and the action live. The sand-covered court's dimensions – it must be at least 40 centimetres deep – are the same as the indoor version. Each two-person team, with no substitutes permitted, is allowed three hits to return the ball and no player can hit the ball twice in a row.

## WHEN THE KIT FITS...

Women Beach Volleyball players have the option of playing in a one-piece uniform, but most prefer bikinis, which are more comfortable and allow for a greater range of motion. At the 2006 Asian Games, only one Muslim country fielded a team in the Beach Volleyball series, amid concerns that the uniform was inappropriate. Men's Beach Volleyball players wear loose-fitting vests and shorts that reach the mid-thigh.

## FANS FLOCK TO THE BEACH

Eighteen teams competed in the first women's Beach Volleyball tournament at the 1996 Games in Atlanta, an event attended by more than 107,000 spectators. Brazil dominated, with Jackie Silva and Sandra Pires beating fellow Brazilians Monica Rodrigues and Adriana Samuel for the gold medal. Australians Natalie Cook and Kerri-Ann Pottharst won bronze.

↓ Brazil's Sandra Pires (left) and Jackie Silva (right) won the first women's Beach Volleyball event held at Atlanta 1996.

**"BRAZIL  
DOMINATED  
WITH SILVA  
AND PIRES"**



↑ Kerri Walsh, left, blocks a spike from Jennifer Kessy during the London 2012 women's Beach Volleyball final at Horse Guards Parade.

## NO CHANGING GUARD

Two huge Olympic Flags hung incongruously over Whitehall as Beach Volleyball was played out, through the famous archways, on Horse Guards Parade in a 15,000 stadium alive with packed seats, music and live commentary. The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, had described the 'semi-naked women' playing Beach Volleyball as 'glistening like wet otters', but the competition was deadly serious and the women's competition saw the United States' women's pair win a third successive Olympic title. Misty May-Treanor and Kerri Walsh won the final to earn the accolade of 'the greatest Beach Volleyball team of all time' from beaten fellow Americans April Ross and Jennifer Kessy.

## EUROPEAN BREAKTHROUGH

The United States' domination of the women's Beach Volleyball at London 2012 was not matched by the country's men. Both USA men's pairs were knocked out early in the competition, one by Italians Daniele Lupo and Paolo Nicolai (who lost in the quarter-finals) and the other by Latvians Martins Plavins and Janis Smedins (who went on to win bronze). Germans Julius Brink and Jonas Reckermann won the men's Beach Volleyball gold medal, a breakthrough that reflected the increasing strength of European teams challenging the American-Brazilian duopoly. This was the first victory for Europe since the sport was added to the Olympic Games at Atlanta 1996. Reckermann said: 'I hope this will encourage everyone in the sport in Europe. It's great to be the ones who did it for the first time.'



# CYCLING

A foundation sport of the modern Olympics, today cycling events are among the most keenly contested at the Games

➔ *Bradley Wiggins rides on his way to the gold medal in the Time Trial at London 2012, thus completing the unique double of Olympic Games gold medal and Tour de France yellow jersey in the same year.*







# CYCLING – ROAD

Road Cycling, for men, was first contested at the 1896 Games in Athens. The women's Individual Road Race has been contested since Los Angeles 1984. Two Road Races were contested at London 2012: a 250km race for men, and a 140km equivalent for women. Time Trials on the road were also held, with riders setting off 90 seconds apart. Team races were contested from 1912 to 1956, with each country's best performers' average counted, while Road Team Trials were held from 1960 to 1992.

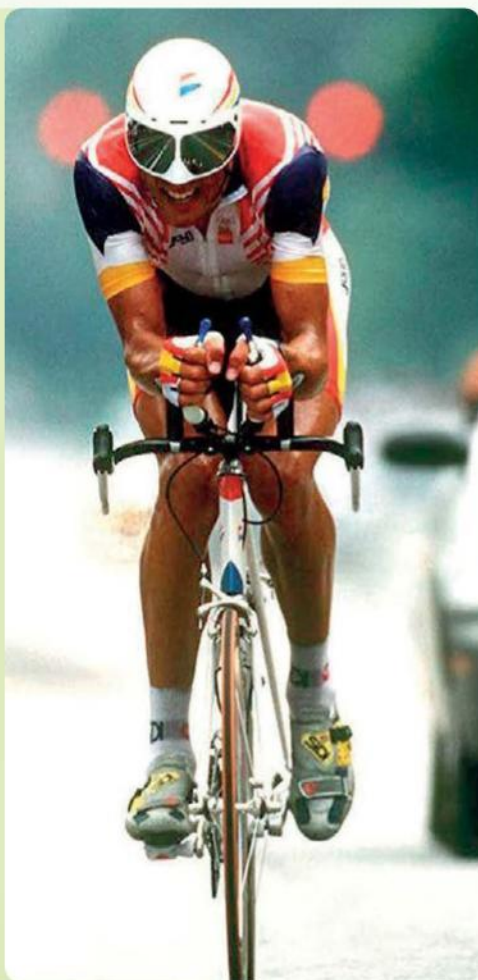
## A BORROWER BE

Cycling featured at the inaugural Games in 1896 – a full seven years before the introduction of the Tour de France – with home-country hero Aristidis Konstantinidis winning the men's Road Race through Athens. Yet Cycling would not return to the Games until 1912. In 1896, Konstantinidis completed his gruelling 87-kilometre (54-mile) ride from Athens to Marathon and back again in a winning time of 3:22.31 seconds, despite falling off his bicycle at one point and reportedly having to borrow a replacement bike when his own broke. His luck ran out on the track in the 10km and 100km races, though – he finished fifth in the 10km after a collision with compatriot Georgios Kolettis and he was among the seven (out of nine) racers who failed to complete the 100km contest.

## WHAT GOES ON TOUR

Spain's Miguel Indurain became the first Tour de France champion to add an Olympic Games gold, when he won the first men's Road Time Trial at the 1996 Games in Atlanta. That triumph completed a stunning winning run, after he claimed five consecutive Tour de France championships between 1991 and 1995. He was helped, though, by the fact that Atlanta 1996 was the first Olympic Games to admit professional cyclists. Bradley Wiggins went on to emulate Indurain's feat at London 2012.

➔ *Five-time Tour de France winner Miguel Indurain added a gold medal to his trophy haul at Atlanta 1996.*



## LONG-SERVING LONGO

France's evergreen Jeannie Longo has competed in more Olympic Games than any other cyclist. The 2008 Games in Beijing were her seventh, having first competed at the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984. Longo ended her storied and successful Olympic career with four medals – one gold (from the Road Race in 1996), two silvers (the Road Race in 1992 and the Time Trial in 1996), and one bronze (from the Time Trial in 2000). Her final appearance at the Games in 2008, saw her finish fourth in the Road Time Trial, just two seconds behind the bronze-medal winner.

## CYCLE OF VICTORY

As is to be expected, given the sport's phenomenal popularity in the country, France hold the record for the most gold medals in the men's Team Road Race (an event that ran from 1912 all the way up until 1992) with four wins – in 1920, 1924, 1936 and 1956 respectively. The USSR (with three successive wins between 1972 and 1980) lie second on the all-time winners' list alongside Italy, whose wins came across more than half a century in 1932, 1960 and 1984.

**“UNSURPRISINGLY, FRANCE HOLD THE RECORD FOR THE MOST GOLD MEDALS IN THE MEN'S TEAM ROAD RACE”**

## KROL'S STARRING ROLES

Monique Krol of the Netherlands, winner of the women's Road Race in 1988, missed out on retaining her title when she could only finish third at Barcelona 1992. Yet her bronze medal there, four years after taking gold in Seoul, made her the first cyclist to win medals in the same individual Cycling event at successive Olympic Games.

## LEADER OF THE PACK

Not many races could be closer run than the 194-kilometre (121-mile) men's Road Race at Tokyo 1964, won by Italy's Mario Zanin. He finished in a time of 4:39:51.63 – only 0.2 seconds ahead of Denmark's Kjell Rodian. In fact, only 0.16 seconds divided the first 51 finishers, 26 of whom were all recorded at the third-best time of 4:39:51.74, though it was Belgium's Walter Godefroot who was awarded bronze.



## HUGHES BETTER, HUGHES BEST

Canada's Clara Hughes was a woman for all seasons. At the 1996 and 2000 Summer Games in Atlanta and Sydney she competed as a cyclist – securing two bronzes, in the women's Road Race and the women's Time Trial. She was also an accomplished speed skater, winning women's 5km bronze at the 2002 Winter Olympics at Salt Lake City and then women's 5km gold and women's Team Pursuit silver four years later. Hughes was the first person to win more than one medal at both the Summer and Winter Olympic Games.

➔ *Canada's Clara Hughes won two Cycling bronze medals in the Summer Olympic Games and gold, silver and bronze medals in the Winter Olympic Games – a unique feat.*



## CAVENDISH LEFT BEHIND

Alexandr Vinokurov upset British dreams when he, and not Mark Cavendish, sprinted away with Olympic gold in the men's Road Race at London 2012. The euphoria fired by Bradley Wiggins's historic victory in the Tour de France weeks earlier had raised hopes of the British team bringing Mark Cavendish through to gold on the first formal day of competition and to maintain the momentum fired by the Opening Ceremony hours earlier. However, when Kazakh veteran Vinokurov and Colombia's Rigoberto Uran attacked out of a 26-rider breakaway with 8km left, the British team – who had appeared in command of the pace – were unable to raise an effective response. World champion Cavendish finished only 29th and was massively disappointed at the manner in which the opportunity had escaped him.



## LIZZIE THE FIRST

Lizzie Armistead confessed to feeling 'a bit shocked' after winning Great Britain's first medal at London 2012 – silver in the women's Road Race on Day 2 of the Games. Marianne Vos of the Netherlands claimed gold with Russian Olga Zabelinskaya third after a thrilling, rain-soaked race ended with the trio leading a sprint finish on The Mall in front of Buckingham Palace. Armistead, 23, from Otley in Yorkshire, had won five track cycling world championship medals in 2009 and 2011 before switching to road racing. She was the first of many British medallists to acknowledge home crowd support as 'the most special thing I've experienced, amazing'.

↓ *Marianne Vos outlasted Lizzie Armistead to win the gold medal in the women's Cycling Road Race at London 2012. The last Dutch Road Race medallist had been Leontien van Moorsel (née Zijlaard), who won gold in both the women's Road Race and the Time Trial at Sydney 2000 and the Time Trial at Athens 2004.*





# CYCLING – MEN'S TRACK

Track Cycling has become more refined since the 1896 Games, when the Cycling events culminated in a gruelling 12-hour race. London 2012 featured only five men's Track events: Individual Sprint, Team Sprint, Team Pursuit, the Keirin and the Omnium, which involves six different races, including sprints and time trials.

## HURLEY'S EARLY GLORY

The record for most cycling gold medals in one Olympic Games was set more than a century before Chris Hoy's treble feat at the 2008 Games at Beijing. At the 1904 Games in St Louis, the United States' Marcus Hurley was victorious in the quarter-mile, third-mile, half-mile and one-mile races, as well as claiming a bronze medal in the two-mile contest.

## THE FEATS OF FLAMENG

France's Leon Flameng was rewarded for his sportsmanship when Cycling first appeared at the modern Games in Athens in 1896. He took gold in the 100-kilometre track race, despite stopping during his 300 laps, getting off his bike and waiting to be caught up by a Greek opponent who had been delayed by mechanical difficulties. Flameng fell from his own bike close to the finish, but still ended in first place – and with a French flag tied to his leg. Also on the Athens track that summer, he added silver in the 10km race and bronze in the 2km Sprint.

↓ *France's Leon Flameng (left) took the gold medal in the 100km race at the inaugural modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896.*



## DOUBLING UP, TWICE OVER

Cheered on by his enthusiastic home crowd at the 1960 Games in Rome, Italy's Sante Gaiardoni became the first person to win gold in both the 1km Sprint and 1km Time Trial events. He had gone into the Games as the reigning amateur world champion, but decided to turn professional before defending his Olympic crown. Gaiardoni proved to be just as successful in the paid ranks as he later went on to add the professional world title to his curriculum vitae in 1964.

## BRITANNIA RULES THE TRACK

Great Britain maintained their domination of men's Olympic Track Cycling at London 2012, winning four of the five gold medals on offer, and taking bronze in the other event, the Omnium. This feat was more remarkable because a rule-change for London 2012 limited each nation to only one competitor in each event. Both Jason Kenny and Chris Hoy added two more golds to their personal hauls, while Great Britain shattered world records in both the Team Pursuit and the Team Sprint. Kenny, a specialist sprinter, won gold at London 2012 in both Team Sprint and Individual Sprint – in which he broke the world record – to add to the Team Sprint gold and Individual Sprint silver he won at Beijing 2008.

**“FOLLOWING HIS BEIJING 2008 GLORY, HOY WAS VOTED BBC SPORTS PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR AND ALSO RECEIVED A KNIGHTHOOD ”**

## SIR CHRIS THE GREATEST

At London 2012, Sir Chris Hoy strengthened an already valid claim to being the greatest male cyclist in the history of the Games. He retired from Olympic competition after winning six gold medals and a silver across the 2004, 2008 and 2012 Games. Hoy won his first gold medal at Athens 2004 – in the 1km Time Trial – and he set an Olympic record of 1:00.711, a mark that will not be beaten, since it was the last time the event was contested.

Hoy responded by training in new disciplines. This paid off admirably at the 2008 Games in Beijing, where his triumphs in the Individual Sprint, Team Sprint and Keirin made him the first British athlete to win three gold medals at one Games since swimmer Henry Taylor at London 1908. He also set another Olympic Games record with a time of 9.815 in the Individual Sprint.

A few months after his Beijing glory, Hoy was voted BBC Sports Personality of the Year and received a knighthood in the Queen's New Year Honours List. Britain's 2012 Tour de France winner Bradley Wiggins summed up the respect the entire cycling world had for Hoy when he said: 'He is the marker for everyone else because he was, in some ways, the model athlete off the bike as well as on it.'





◀ Sir Chris Hoy waves to the crowd after winning one of his two gold medals at London 2012. The Scotsman, who announced his retirement from Olympic competition, won his fifth and sixth golds, to add to the silver he won at Sydney 2000.

## HOY LEADS FROM THE START

Sir Chris Hoy returned to London early from the cycling team's training camp so that he could be Great Britain's flag bearer at the London 2012 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony. Two weeks later, he had emphatically ensured his place in British sporting folklore with his fifth and sixth Olympic gold medals, winning in both the Keirin and the Team Sprint events. This haul put him a

little ahead of Bradley Wiggins – his seven medals comprise six golds and a silver, while Wiggins' seven are made up of four gold, a silver and two bronze. A former track cyclist who earned greater fame in road cycling, Wiggins, like Hoy, passed rower Steve Redgrave's previous British record of six medals (Redgrave had won five gold medals). Hoy's struggle to hold back tears at the medals presentation was one of the iconic images of the Games.







## BACK IN THE SADDLE

Britain's Bradley Wiggins became the first cyclist to make a successful defence of a Pursuit title at the Games, winning the Individual Pursuit gold at the 2004 Games in Athens and again in Beijing four years later. In Athens, he also won silver in the Team Pursuit and bronze in the Madison, making him the first Briton to win three medals at one Games since track-and-field athlete Mary Rand achieved the feat at Tokyo 1964.

◀ *Bradley Wiggins (left) leads Great Britain's Team Pursuit team to gold at the 2008 Games in Beijing. Wiggins changed disciplines after 2008, and went on the road to become, in 2012, the first British rider to win the Tour de France.*





# CYCLING – WOMEN'S TRACK

Women did not contest Road Racing until Los Angeles 1984 and Track Racing had to wait four further years for the first Individual Sprint (at Seoul 1988) and eight for the first Individual Pursuit (at Barcelona 1992). Concerns about an imbalance between male and female races (the men had seven races compared to the women's three in 2008) were addressed at London 2012 – with five contests each.

## “MEARES WON AND PENDLETON HELD HER RIVAL'S ARM ALOFT ON THEIR JOINT LAP OF HONOUR”

### ROMERO'S CONQUESTS

Rebecca Romero became only the second woman to win medals in two different sports at a Summer Games when she clinched Cycling gold in the Individual Pursuit at Beijing 2008. She had earlier won a silver medal in Rowing, at Athens 2004, in the Quadruple Sculls event. She had switched to track cycling after a back injury forced her to give up rowing. Romero went to Beijing as the first-ever Brit to compete in two different sports at the Summer Games. She had hoped to defend her Cycling title at London 2012 – especially since she grew up in the south London borough of Sutton – but was left disappointed when the Individual Pursuit event was dropped from the programme.

### LION-HEARTED LEONTIEN

Leontien van Moorsel's cycling feats are more amazing when one takes into account her health struggles away from racing. She won four medals – including three golds – at Sydney 2000: gold in both women's individual races, and in the 3km Individual Pursuit, as well as silver in the track points race, and was one of only six triple gold-medal winners at Sydney 2000. She retained her women's Road Time Trial title at Athens 2004 and added bronze in the 3km Pursuit. Before such successes, however, she fought against depression and anorexia that saw her lose 20kg in weight. She is the only woman cyclist to have won six medals at the Olympic Games, though Great Britain's Bradley Wiggins and Chris Hoy raised the bar for the men to seven at London 2012.

➔ *The Netherlands' six-time Cycling medallist Leontien van Moorsel.*



### VICTORIA'S REIGN ENDS

Victoria Pendleton, the golden girl of British cycling after winning two medals at Beijing 2008, retired after London 2012 having added further lustre to her career with another gold and silver. It didn't start well for her when she and Jess Varnish were excluded from the Team Sprint for a technical fault, but she then won Keirin gold, before attempting to defend her Individual Sprint title against her old Australian rival Anna Meares. Pendleton appeared to have won race one of the three-leg final by 0.001 sec, but was again disqualified, this time for riding outside of her sprinting lane. Meares won the second race and Pendleton sportingly held her rival's arm aloft on their lap of honour.



↑ *Erika Salumae (centre) took Individual Sprint gold (for the USSR) at Seoul 1988 and then successfully defended her title (for Estonia) at Barcelona 1992.*

### FLYING THE FLAG

Two different countries – but the same athlete – won the first two sprint Cycling events contested by women at any Olympic Games. The race was introduced in Seoul in 1988, when Erika Salumae claimed gold for the USSR. Following the break-up of the Soviet Union, she competed for her native Estonia four years later and successfully defended her title in Barcelona. Salumae hardly put a foot wrong in becoming Estonia's first female gold medallist, as well as the country's first medallist since 1936 and the first gold medallist from any country formally separating from the Soviet Union. Alas, her Victory Ceremony was somewhat marred when organisers raised her country's flag the wrong way up – prompting Salumae to shake her head in amazement while standing on the podium, though she later insisted she minded the mistake 'only a little bit'.





## SO NEAR, SO FAR FOR FERRIS

Australia's Michelle Ferris broke the Games record in spectacular fashion in the women's Sprint in Atlanta in 1996, completing a qualifier in 11.21 seconds. That outstanding time has not been beaten in any Games since – yet Ferris somehow still missed out on gold, finishing second behind Felicia Bellanger in the final. Ferris also finished a place behind Bellanger four years later in the women's 500m Time Trial – an event only staged at the 2000 and 2004 Games.

↩ *An Olympic record but no gold medal for Michelle Ferris at Atlanta 1996.*

## ICE CHRISTA

Like Clara Hughes and Connie Carpenter-Phinney, East Germany's Christa Rothenburger won Olympic Games medals in both Speed Skating and Cycling – yet she is the only athlete to have claimed Summer and Winter Games medals in the same year. At Calgary 1988, she won silver in the 500km Sprint and gold in the 1000m. Seven months later, at the Summer Games in Seoul, she added a silver medal in the women's Sprint – having been persuaded in 1980 to take up Cycling by her coach and later husband Ernst Ludwig. She ended her career with two other Winter Olympics Speed Skating medals – gold in the 500m Sprint in Sarajevo in 1984 and bronze in the same event in Albertville eight years later.

↓ *Christina Rothenburger (right) was on a roll in 1988.*



↑ *Laura Trott burst onto the women's track cycling scene at the age of 19 in 2011, but came of age in the 2012 Olympic Games in London, winning two gold medals, in the women's Team Pursuit and in the multi-discipline Omnium.*

## TROTT AT A GALLOP

At London 2012, Laura Trott announced her arrival as Britain's next Track Cycling superstar by claiming two gold medals at her first Olympic Games – in the Team Pursuit and the six-event Omnium. At the age of 20 she became the youngest woman to win gold at any Olympic Games Track Cycling event (Sir Chris Hoy won his first Olympic gold at 28) and joined a select band of British women – including Victoria Pendleton, Rebecca Adlington and Dame Kelly Holmes – to have won two Olympic gold medals. Trott's precocious talent had been recognised when she was drafted into the British team for the team pursuit at the 2011 World Championships. Team GB Cycling's performance director David Brailsford described Trott's feats at London 2012 as 'phenomenal'.



# EQUESTRIAN

The Games have spawned a number of equine and human stars in Dressage, Jumping and Eventing over the years





👉 Zara Phillips (aboard High Kingdom), the eldest granddaughter of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, became the first member of the British Royal Family to win an Olympic Games medal, taking silver in the Eventing Team Competition at London 2012.





## DRESSAGE

Dressage competition at the Games remained a uniquely exclusive club open only to male cavalry officers until the Helsinki Games in 1952, when both male and female civilians finally gained admittance and the ability to compete. Today, as a sport that is open to all comers, Dressage can legitimately lay claim to being the fastest-growing Equestrian event contested at the Olympic Games.

### KING OF THE CASTLE

Stockholm 1912 saw the debut of Dressage as a sport at the Olympic Games. At the time, the event was dominated by the host nation, with Carl Bonde and his white-faced steed Emperor leading a triumvirate of Swedish medallists. Such was the extent of Sweden's superiority that all six of the country's riders finished in the top eight of a truly international field of 21 competitors. Bonde later went on to claim further Games success, winning the silver medal at Amsterdam 1928, before he won the even more prestigious title of 'King of the Castle', when he inherited the spectacular Tudor castle of Tjolöholm in Fjärås, Sweden.

### OUT OF SIGHT BUT NOT MIND

The Olympic Dressage competition at the 1956 Games did not take place in the Host City of Melbourne. Strict quarantine laws made taking horses to Melbourne in November impractical, and all of the Equestrian events took place in Stockholm the preceding June. As at Stockholm 1912, the Dressage events were won by Swedish riders, with Henri Saint Cyr and his mount Juli winning the Individual event as well as forming part of Sweden's triumphant gold medal-winning team. At the emotional medal ceremony for the Individual event, Saint Cyr helped disabled silver medallist Lis Hartel onto the medal podium.

### WRITING ON THE WALL...

Mystery shrouds the origins of the letters that adorn the 20 x 60 metre Dressage arena, which first appeared during the Olympic Games in the 1920s. Certain movements have to take place in the vicinity of specific letters and serve to guide the judges on just how much control the rider has of the horse. Although their debut came at the Olympic Games, two of the more plausible explanations for the letters pre-date the modern Games: one is that they were the initials of the first cities that the Romans conquered; while another theory is that the letters come from the time of the Old German Imperial Court, when courtiers representing the various dignitaries would be positioned around the stable yard in a strict order with the horses ready to ride.

### BEATING ADVERSITY

Lis Hartel is arguably the highest-profile competitor in the history of Dressage at the Olympic Games, and her legacy lives on. The Dane became the first woman in Equestrian history to win a medal at the Games when she won silver medals at the Individual Dressage in 1952 and 1956. What made her achievement all the more remarkable was that she competed despite having been paralysed below the knees as a result of contracting polio at the age of 23. Just eight years later, and walking on crutches, Hartel won her first silver in Helsinki. Her determination raised the profile of disabled sports and she played a major role in starting the movement for therapeutic riding schools.

↓ Denmark's Lis Hartel (left) - pictured with Henri Saint Cyr (centre) - defied disability to win two silver medals in Dressage (in 1952 and 1956).



**"KLIMKE MADE HIS DEBUT AT ROME 1960 AND, FOUR YEARS LATER IN TOKYO, HE SECURED HIS FIRST TEAM GOLD MEDAL"**

### KAISER KLIMKE

Reiner Klimke holds the distinction of having been the most successful equestrian rider in history of the Olympic Games, as a member of West Germany's dominant Dressage team for three decades. In all Klimke won six gold and two bronze medals. He made his debut at Rome 1960 and, four years later in Tokyo, he secured his first team gold medal aboard Dux. He also featured in winning West German teams at Mexico City 1968 and at Montreal 1976, before claiming double gold at Los Angeles 1984. Riding Ahlerich, Klimke won the Individual Dressage competition and helped West Germany to team gold both at these Games and at Seoul four years later - his final appearance in an Olympic Games career that had spanned 28 years.



## BRITISH BREAKTHROUGH

At London 2012, Great Britain won the Dressage Team Competition for the first time since Amsterdam 1928. Charlotte Dujardin riding Valegro scored 83.286 in the final section. Carl Hester on Uthopia was third on 80.571 with Laura Bechtolsheimer on Mistral Hojris fifth with 77.794. Their combined team score of 79.979 saw them clinch the gold medal ahead of Germany, in second on 78.216, and the Netherlands, who finished third with 77.124. The extra significance was that the victory took Britain's gold-medal tally past the 19 they had won at Beijing 2008. 'Valegro was unbelievable,' said Hester, its joint owner.

## DUJARDIN'S WINNING TUNE

A mesmeric performance by Charlotte Dujardin, going last on Valegro, will live long in the memories of every spectator at Greenwich Park as she claimed a first-ever British gold in the Dressage Individual Competition. Dujardin set an Olympic record score of 90.089 points. GB team-mate Laura Bechtolsheimer, leading at one point, finished with the bronze and fifth place went to Carl Hester, Dujardin's mentor and tutor. The silver medal went to Dutch rider Adelinde Cornelissen. Holst's 'Jupiter' from The Planets suite and Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance were appropriate choices amid the accompanying score.

↓ Charlotte Dujardin and Valegro 'danced' to double gold at London 2012.



↑ Germany's Isabell Werth won five gold medals in Team Dressage.

## GERMAN GOLD

West Germany and, later, Germany have dominated the Team Dressage event at the Olympic Games. The run of gold medals started with West Germany's victory at Montreal 1976, but was interrupted when the country boycotted the 1980 Games in Moscow. West Germany returned to clinch gold at Los Angeles 1984 and Seoul 1988 and, as Germany, won at Barcelona 1992, Atlanta 1996, Sydney 2000, Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008. This magnificent sequence of victories, spanning fully 28 years, finally came to an end when the Germans were beaten to the gold medal by Great Britain at London 2012 and had to make do with the silver medal.

## WOMEN'S LATE START

Women were not allowed to compete in Dressage at the Olympic Games until Helsinki 1952. At those Games, Lis Hartel made the first mark for women when claiming a silver medal in the Individual event. Some 20 years later, at the 1972 Games in Munich, West Germany's Liselott Linsenhoff went one better, becoming the first woman to win an individual gold medal at the Games in any Equestrian event, when she captured the Individual Dressage crown. That particular competition featured 33 riders, 21 of which were women.



# EVENTING

Eventing made its Olympic Games debut at Stockholm 1912. A fluid relatively fluid discipline, the competition has been through many format changes down the years, before settling on its current setup. One of the more significant changes to the competition saw Dressage completely dropped from the Eventing programme at Antwerp 1920, only to return in Paris four years later.

## CLOCKING OUT

The Eventing competition at Athens 2004 was marred by confusion and controversy. During the Jumping phase, German rider Bettina Hoy twice passed between the start flags, first during her warm-up and then in the competition, blissfully unaware of the impact this had on the clock, which needed to be restarted. The ground jury realised the mistake and gave Hoy the 14 time penalties she would have received had her time started with the first, premature pass between the start flags. This dropped both Hoy and her German team out of the medals, when they had looked poised for Individual and Team gold respectively. The German team lodged an initially successful objection to the technical appeal committee and the gold medals were reinstated. However, the French team, backed by the British and Americans, argued to the Court of Arbitration of Sport that the technical committee should not have revoked the time penalties for Hoy's score and the original decision was upheld, resulting in France claiming the gold medal.

↓ *Bettina Hoy's error at the start of her stadium-jumping round cost Germany the Team Eventing gold medal at Athens 2004.*



## WELFARE STATE

The Eventing competition at the Olympic Games has proven a breeding ground for innovations in horse welfare. The 1936 Games in Berlin saw new rules introduced to help protect horses from the use of performance-altering drugs, especially stimulants and sedatives. The same event brought in a new elimination rule for horses that were deemed exhausted or lame following the endurance test.

## COOL RIDERS

The Olympic Games have often introduced significant scientific advances to sport and the 1996 Games in Atlanta were no exception. They provided the setting for a new experiment to cool the competing horses down after the cross-country phase of Eventing, including the deployment of misting fans, and added an additional hold during Phase C to ensure the horses were cooling properly. The competition also featured an extensive study of the effects on the horses of heat and of different methods of cooling. This was the first instance of an extensive veterinary study being conducted in conjunction with the Games, and it was deemed a great success overall.

## GOLDEN AUSTRALIA

Few Olympians can match the determination of Bill Roycroft in the Team Competition at the 1960 Games in Rome. One of only five Australians to have competed at five separate Games, Roycroft's performance in Rome laid the foundations for a golden era for the Australian Equestrian team at the Games. During the cross-country phase, Roycroft took a heavy fall from his mount Our Solo. Reports vary as to the extent of his injuries – some suggested that he broke his neck – but they appeared to have cost his country the gold medal. However, Roycroft had other ideas and, after discharging himself from hospital the following day, he rode a faultless round in the Jumping to help Australia win its first-ever Eventing gold medal.

## ROYALTY REIGNS

Although women were allowed to compete in the Eventing competitions from Helsinki 1952, it was not until Tokyo 1964 that American Helena du Pont became the first female participant. Subsequent Games have enjoyed a royal seal of approval, with HRH Princess Anne, the daughter of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, competing as part of the Great Britain Eventing team at Montreal 1976. She was the first member of the British Royal Family to compete at an Olympic Games, while her daughter, Zara Phillips, competed at the London 2012 Games and, riding High Kingdom, became the first British royal medallist, taking silver in the Team Eventing.



## SINGING FOR THEIR...

Competing in Eventing at the Games has given riders varying degrees of gravitas. Great Britain's Mary King has bankrolled her Games successes – she won medals at Athens 2004, Beijing 2008 and London 2012 – with a wide variety of jobs, including working in a butcher's shop, in a kitchen and as a gardener. Team-mate William Fox-Pitt teaches the rich and famous how to ride, with pop star Madonna among his clientele.

➔ *Mary King and Call Again Cavalier in Cross Country action during the Team Event at Beijing 2008.*



## KIWI INSPIRATION

New Zealand's Mark Todd is one of the most successful of all Three-Day Eventing riders in the history of the Olympic Games. He made his Games debut at Los Angeles 1984, winning the Individual gold medal riding Charisma. The pair were possibly the most formidable horse-and-rider partnership in the history of Eventing at the Games, retaining their gold medal four years later, after which Charisma was retired from competition. Todd followed up with bronze in the Individual competition at Sydney 2000, and then announced his retirement. However, the lure of the Games proved irresistible and Todd returned to competition at Beijing 2008 and finished 17th.

**“CHARISMA AND TODD WERE POSSIBLY THE GAMES’ GREATEST EVER EVENTING PARTNERSHIP”**

## MORE THAN A SPORT

For triple Olympic Games gold medallist Adolph Dirk Coenraad van der Voort van Zijp, taking part in the Eventing competition at Paris 1924 was hardly the most difficult period of his life. A lieutenant in the Second Regiment of the Hussars in 1924, he was eligible – as a military man – to compete in Paris, where he won Individual and Team gold medals for his country. He went on to help the Dutch team to retain gold on home soil in the Amsterdam Games in 1928. When the Second World War broke out, however, tragedy struck as the Netherlands were invaded by the Nazis and Van der Voort van Zijp was captured and detained as a prisoner of war in Germany.

## GERMAN DOUBLE FOR JUNG

Germany repeated their double success from Beijing 2008 by collecting Eventing Team Competition gold at London 2012, while Michael Jung marked his 30th birthday by adding the Eventing Individual Olympic crown to his world and European titles. Although Great Britain were the only team to bring home three riders inside the endurance time – Zara Phillips (on High Kingdom), Tina Cook (Miners Frolic) and Nicola Wilson (Opposition Buzz) – the Germans dominated the Jumping to claim gold with three clear rounds. Great Britain took silver and New Zealand bronze. Jung took Eventing Individual Competition gold ahead of Sweden's Sara Algotsson Ostholt (Wega).

➔ *Michael Jung and Sam clear a gate in the jumping section of the Eventing competition at London 2012 on their way to gold.*



## KING THE QUEEN

Great Britain's Mary King was the oldest member of the entire Team GB squad in action at London 2012. At 51, she was representing her country in a sixth Games stretching back to Barcelona 1992. Her reward now totals two silver and one bronze medal in the Eventing Team Competition. Incredibly, she has maintained her career despite breaking her neck in a fall while exercising horses at her home in 2001. Less than a year later, she finished third at the testing Burghley Horse Trials. King had been British champion a record four times, while her other honours include two gold and one silver medal in the World Equestrian Games team eventing competition and four team gold medals at the European Eventing Championships, along with one bronze and one silver medal in the individual event.



# JUMPING

Although an Individual Jumping event was contested at the 1900 Olympic Games in Paris, the current programme (of both Team and Individual events) did not take place until more than a decade later at Stockholm 1912, although it has featured at every Games since. Germany lead the way in both the Individual event (with five gold medals) and in the Team event (with eight successes).

## NISHI MEMORIAL

An Olympian whose exploits came to be exploited in the movies was Japanese rider Takeichi Nishi, an aristocratic cavalry officer who won the gold medal in the Individual Competition at the Los Angeles 1932 Games. Riding Uranus, 'Baron Nishi' became – and remains to this day – the only rider from his country to strike gold. During the Second World War he took part in the defence of Iwo Jima with a tank regiment and died there in 1945, possibly during a mass suicide. His life was recorded for posterity in the Clint Eastwood film Letters from Iwo Jima.

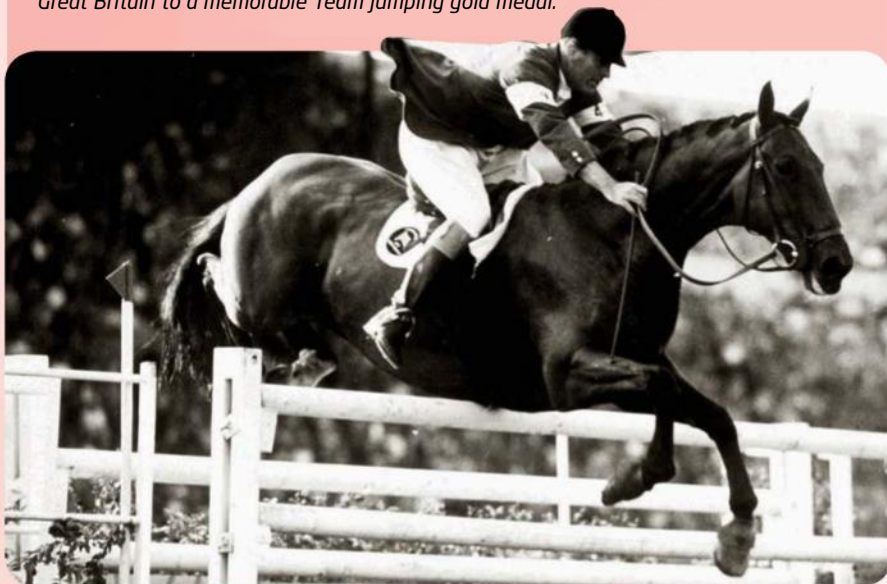
## STAMP OF FAME

The giant chestnut Big Ben holds a special place in Canadian hearts. Born in Belgium and later sold to Canadian Ian Millar, he won 40 showjumping Grand Prix events and two consecutive World Cups. He competed at two Olympic Games as part of Canada's fourth-placed teams at Los Angeles 1984 and Seoul 1988. Few Olympians can have been more acclaimed: Big Ben has been honoured with his own stamp by Canada Post; was inducted into the Ontario Sports Legends Hall of Fame; had a statue erected and a book written about him; and is one of only two horses, along with the legendary racehorse Northern Dancer, inducted into the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame.

## MIGHTY FOXHUNTER

Great Britain's solitary gold medal at Helsinki 1952 came courtesy of its Jumping team, captained by the inimitable Harry Llewellyn and his mount Foxhunter. Llewellyn had previously been a successful jump jockey, finishing second in the 1936 Grand National on Ego. At the Games, a disastrous final morning had seen the British team slip to sixth position, with Llewellyn claiming that lack of sleep was partly to blame for his abject performance. An hour's sleep at lunchtime brought redemption, however, and the final afternoon phase saw the pair record the clear round that secured gold. The press treated Llewellyn as though he had single-handedly saved the honour of British sport, while both Winston Churchill and the new Queen, Her Majesty Elizabeth II, sent telegrams of congratulation. Foxhunter was retired in 1953, but his name lives on in the form of the Foxhunter Trophy, awarded to the most promising horses and riders of each new generation.

↓ *Colonel Harry Llewellyn guides Foxhunter to a clear round at Helsinki 1952 to guide Great Britain to a memorable Team Jumping gold medal.*



## WALL GAMES

The life and times of Humberto Mariles Cortés could fill an entire book alone. The Mexican became his nation's first-ever gold medallist when, riding his home-bred horse Arete, he won the Individual competition at London 1948. Doubling up as a member of the jubilant Mexican team, Cortés deployed a bold approach: in the final round, his horse jumped into the water obstacle, incurring faults, in what appeared to be a deliberate move. The tactic duly gave Arete the balance he needed to clear the following large wall – the only horse to do so. Cortés met a tragic end: he was imprisoned in Paris in 1972, having been caught drug-trafficking, and died in his cell later that year.

## DOUBLE CLEARS

It took a genuine Touch of Class for an equine competitor to transcend human endeavour at the Olympic Games. That was the name of the former racehorse that entered showjumping legend in 1984. The bay mare, with rider Joseph Fargis, won the Individual Jumping gold medal and was part of the victorious US team at Los Angeles 1984, posting the first double clear rounds in Games history into the bargain. Her golden exploits resulted in Touch of Class becoming the first non-human USOC Female Equestrian Athlete of the Year and she was inducted into the Show Jumping Hall of Fame in 2000.





## SAUDI SUCCESS

The dawn of a new century also marked the rise of a new power in Jumping at the Games, with Khaled Al-Eid recording a rare medal for Saudi Arabia at Sydney 2000. The country had first entered the Jumping competition four years earlier in Atlanta, and by Sydney the team had improved under the guidance of Brazilian equestrian legend Nelson Pessoa, whose own son Rodrigo won an Olympic Games gold medal. In winning bronze, Al-Eid defied the label 'rank outsider' that had been bestowed on him by one news bulletin, attributing his success to patient training and the savvy accuracy of his mount Khashm al-'Aan.

◀ *Khaled Al-Eid (on Khashm Al-'Aan) secured Saudi Arabia's first-ever Equestrian medal when he took Individual Jumping bronze at Sydney 2000.*

## SKELTON AND CO IN THE CLEAR

Great Britain captured their first team Jumping Team Competition gold in 60 years – since Helsinki 1952 – after a dramatic tie-breaking jump-off with the Netherlands at London 2012. The jump-off demanded that all team members jump a shortened course, one country alternating with the other. Three clear rounds in the jump-off assured a narrow victory for the British team. One clear round was achieved by veteran Nick Skelton, who had missed out on a medal at five previous Olympic Games. Dutch rider Jur Vrieling had a clean round, but the Netherlands dropped to silver with two rails down for Maikel van der Vleuten and one for Marc Houtzager. A clear for Peter Charles (Vindicat) was vindication indeed.

**“THREE CLEAR ROUNDS IN THE JUMP-OFF GAVE GREAT BRITAIN A NARROW WIN”**

## HERE COMES THE CAVALRY

William C. Steinkraus is a six-time Olympian who, in 1968, became the first American to win an Olympic Games individual gold medal in Equestrian sport, by triumphing in the Jumping in Mexico City. Educated at Yale, Steinkraus served with the US Cavalry during the Second World War before embarking on a hugely successful career in equestrian competition, first competing at the Helsinki 1952 Games as a member of the US bronze medal-winning team. He remained on the US team at every subsequent Olympic Games through to Munich 1972, and is perhaps best remembered for his association with the former unsound racehorse called Snowbound, who was his willing partner at the Mexico City 1968 Games.

## LONDON PRIDE IS SILVER

Appropriately, a horse named London – with 2012 in mind – was a medallist in the Jumping Individual Competition, but he was under the control of Dutch rider Gerco Schroder rather than a British competitor. They won silver behind Switzerland's Steve Guerdat (riding Nino Des Buissonnets), with Ireland's Cian O'Connor (aboard Blue Loyd 12) taking the bronze medal. Guerdat had been a member of the Swiss team that won the Team Competition bronze medal at Beijing 2008. He was the only rider not to collect any jumping or time faults in both rounds. British veteran Nick Skelton (on Big Star) had been in contention for gold until he took a rail out of an upright inspired by the Cutty Sark, a historic tea clipper berthed close to Greenwich Park. He and team-mate Scott Brash (with Hello Sanctos) finished in joint fifth place.


↓ *Steve Guerdat urges Nino Des Buissonnets over a rail during one of his two clear rounds in the Jumping Individual Competition at London 2012.*





# GYMNASTICS

The combination of grace, power, agility and nerve makes the Games' Gymnastics events truly spectacular



Team GB's Kristian Thomas performs his routine on the rings during the Team Competition at London 2012. Great Britain won its first men's Team Competition medal since Stockholm 1912, claiming the bronze behind China and Japan.





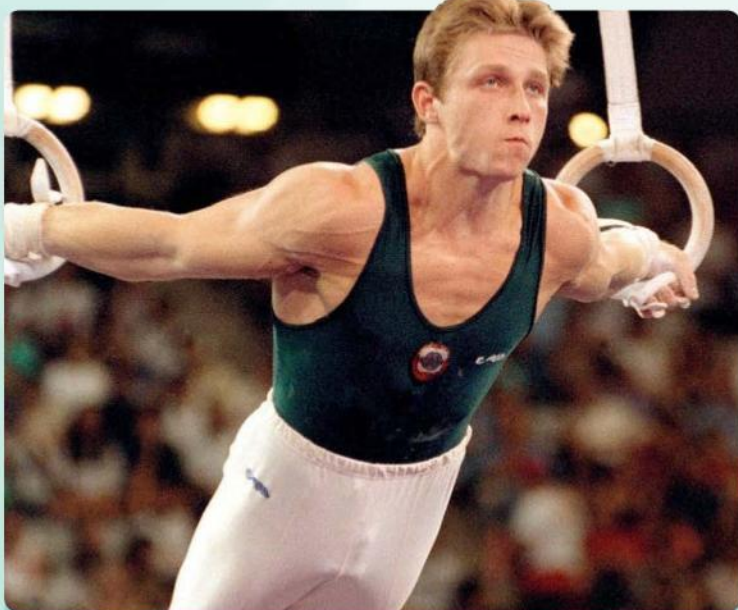


# MEN'S ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS

Men's Artistic Gymnastics is one of the few sports to have been contested at every Olympic Games since Athens 1896. Gymnasts from the Russian Federation (in all its guises - as the Soviet Union and as the Unified Team in 1992) have been the most successful over the years, capturing almost 25 per cent of the total medals available.

## EVER PRESENT

The men's Individual All-Around competition is the only Gymnastics event to have been staged at every Olympic Games since Paris 1900. The leading performers from the Team Competition qualify for the All-Around Final. The gymnasts perform a routine in each of the six disciplines - Floor, Horizontal Bar, Parallel Bars, Pommel Horse, Rings and Vault. Formerly the marks gained were added to their scores from the team round. Now the champion is the man with the highest overall tally in the pressure-cooker atmosphere of the final.



↑ *The Unified Team's Vitaly Scherbo dominated the men's Gymnastics competition at Barcelona 1992, winning six of eight available gold medals.*

## SUPER SCHERBO

Vitaly Scherbo won an unprecedented six of the eight possible Gymnastics gold medals at Barcelona 1992. Owing to the fall of the Soviet Union, Belarussian Scherbo was part of the 'Unified Team', made up of the individual republics that had yet to achieve formal recognition by the International Olympic Committee. He won four of the individual apparatus finals - Rings, Horizontal Bar, Parallel Bars and Vault - to add to his All-Around and Team honours. Only swimmers Mark Spitz and Michael Phelps have ever won more gold medals at a single Games.

## STUKELJ HITS 100

Leopon Stukelj lived most of his life as one of the elder statesmen of gymnastics. Born in 1898 in what is now Slovenia, the All-Around champion at the 1924 Games lived to within four days of his 101st birthday and nearly saw in his third century. He attended the 1996 Games in Atlanta and was presented to the crowd at the Opening Ceremony as the oldest living gold medallist. At the age of 97, he walked jauntily to the presentation platform to join the likes of Carl Lewis, Bob Beamon, Nadia Comaneci and Vitaly Scherbo.

✎ *Aleksandr Dityatin in action at Moscow 1980.*

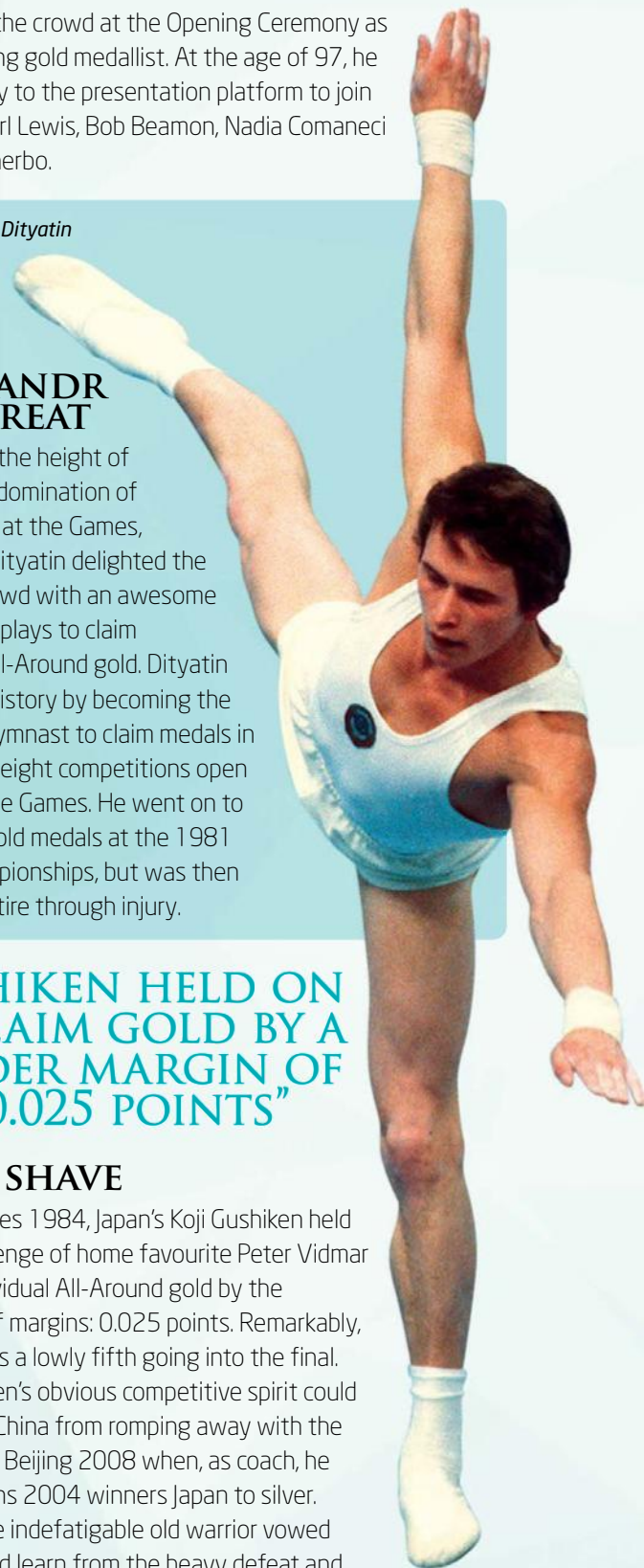
## ALEKSANDR THE GREAT

In 1980, at the height of Soviet bloc domination of Gymnastics at the Games, Aleksandr Dityatin delighted the Moscow crowd with an awesome series of displays to claim Individual All-Around gold. Dityatin also made history by becoming the first male gymnast to claim medals in each of the eight competitions open to him at one Games. He went on to win three gold medals at the 1981 World Championships, but was then forced to retire through injury.

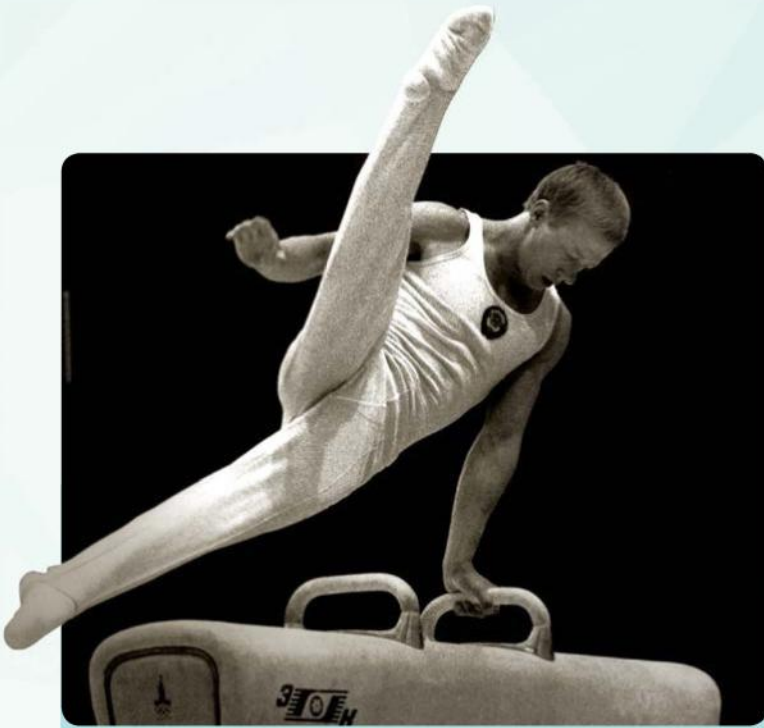
## "GUSHIKEN HELD ON TO CLAIM GOLD BY A SLENDER MARGIN OF JUST 0.025 POINTS"

## CLOSE SHAVE

At Los Angeles 1984, Japan's Koji Gushiken held off the challenge of home favourite Peter Vidmar to claim Individual All-Around gold by the slenderest of margins: 0.025 points. Remarkably, Gushiken was a lowly fifth going into the final. Even Gushiken's obvious competitive spirit could not prevent China from romping away with the Team title at Beijing 2008 when, as coach, he guided Athens 2004 winners Japan to silver. However, the indefatigable old warrior vowed that he would learn from the heavy defeat and 'be up for the next challenge'.







↑ *The Soviet Union's Nikolay Andrianov won an unprecedented 15 medals - seven of them gold - in his three appearances at the Olympic Games.*

## HANDY ANDRIANOV

The 1976 Individual All-Around champion, Nikolay Andrianov, was the most prolific medal winner in the history of men's Gymnastics at the Games. The Soviet superstar won an astounding total of 15 medals across three Games from 1972 to 1980, a tally that included seven gold, five silver and three bronze medals. However, it could all have been so different, as Andrianov only established himself in the powerful USSR team after being called up as a late substitute for the 1971 European Championships. He won six medals there and never looked back.

## CHAMPION CHUKARIN

Viktor Chukarin was the star turn at Helsinki 1952, having overcome great suffering to compete. Chukarin was a prisoner of the Nazis during the Second World War, but after his release he made up for lost time by dedicating himself to gymnastics. He went on to defend the title in Melbourne four years later and was rewarded by the Soviet Union with the post of head of gymnastics at the renowned Institute of Physical Culture in Lvov.

↓ *Viktor Chukarin heads to gold in the Parallel Bars at Melbourne 1956.*

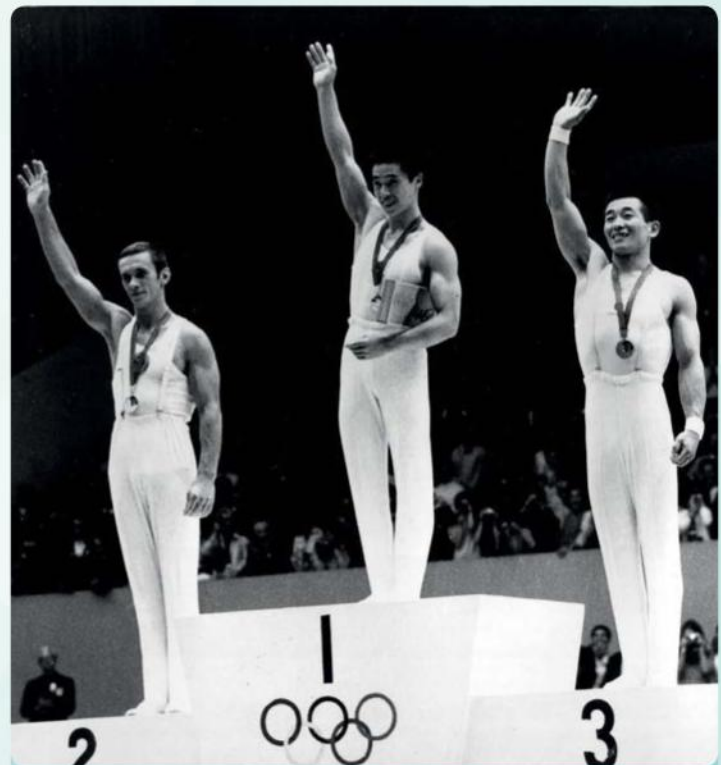


## ROLL UP! ROLL UP!

Italian Alberto Braglia was the first man to win successive Individual All-Around golds when he followed up his title at London 1908 with a similar success in Stockholm four years later. Braglia opted to join a circus as an acrobat as his next challenge, but he returned to the Olympic Games as his country's chief coach at Los Angeles 1932. Braglia led his charges to second in the medal table, still the best showing by the Italians at a Games.

## FLIPPING BRILLIANT

Rowland Wolfe of the United States was just 17 years and 307 days old when, at Los Angeles 1932, he won the only Tumbling competition ever held at the Games. Wolfe's ability to go head over heels earned him the unimaginative nickname of 'Flip'.



↑ *Sawao Kato (centre, with Michail Voronin, left, and Akinori Nakayama) wave to the crowd at the Mexico 1968 men's All-Around Individual Gymnastics medal ceremony.*

## TINY KATO A BIG STAR

Sawao Kato, the 1968 and 1972 Individual All-Around champion, was a diminutive 5ft 3in, but he made up for his lack of stature with absolute composure and stunning skill. At Mexico City 1968, he had a stirring battle for the gold medal with the Soviet Union's Michail Voronin, but at the troubled 1972 Games no one could match him. Kato won 12 medals in Munich, including eight golds, and is Japan's most successful Olympian. He was head judge in the Gymnastics competition at the 2004 Games in Athens.



## TEAM CHAMPIONS

The first medals to be decided in Gymnastics competitions at the Games are those for Team Competition honours. During qualifying, five of a team's six gymnasts perform on all six items of apparatus, with the highest four marks counting. The scores determine which teams advance to the final and which individual gymnasts reach the All-Around Competition and apparatus finals. In the final, three of each team compete on each apparatus with all scores counting. The team with the most points wins.

### CHINA – THE NEW POWER

At Beijing 2008, Host Nation China won Team Competition gold for the second time in three Games, to add to seven of the previous world titles in the event. Coach Yubin Huang described the display at Beijing 2008 as 'perfect'. The Chinese won their first-ever men's Team Competition gold at Sydney 2000, but failed to build on the achievement at Athens 2004, losing to arch-rivals Japan and only finishing fifth. At Beijing 2008, the pressure was intense in the National Indoor Arena, but Kai Zou, Wei Yang, Qin Xiao, Xiaopeng Li, Xu Huang and Yibing Chen were all triumphant. China then made it three golds in four Games at London 2012.

↓ *China's men's team delighted the home crowd when it stormed to gold in the Team Competition at Beijing 2008.*



### SIMPLY FIN-TASTIC

Finland were the foremost nation at London 1948, picking up the men's Team championship with a collection of six gold, two silver and two bronze medals. Among the Finnish team was the remarkable Heikki Savolainen, for whom this was his fifth (out of six) Olympic Games in a career stretching from Amsterdam 1928 (at which he won a bronze medal in the Pommel Horse competition) to Helsinki 1952 – at which he took the Olympic Oath on behalf of the competitors and claimed a Team Competition bronze. In the Pommel Horse competition at London 1948, Savolainen had the same score as team-mates Veikko Huhtanen and Paavo Aaltonen and, uniquely for Gymnastics at the Games, each was awarded a gold medal. London 1948 was the heyday of Finnish gymnastics; they have only won five Gymnastics medals since, the last coming at Mexico 1968.

## FANTASTIC FINNS

The Pommel Horse Competition at the 1948 Games in London produced the only three-way tie for a gold medal in the history of Gymnastics at the Olympic Games. All three men hailed from Finland.

## SMITH EVER CLOSER

Britain's Louis Smith transformed his Beijing 2008 bronze medal into silver in the men's Pommel Horse Competition final at London 2012, while team-mate Max Whitlock took bronze. Two Britons thus stepped up onto the podium in an individual Gymnastics event for the first time in Games' history. The 23-year-old Smith was captain of the men's team. On being told that the Duchess of Cambridge had been watching, he said that 'if I'd have seen her, I'd have probably blown her a kiss'. Hungary's Krisztian Berki, who beat Smith into silver at both the World and European Championships, took gold again. Smith had matched Berki's 16.066, but Berki had a fractionally better execution score.

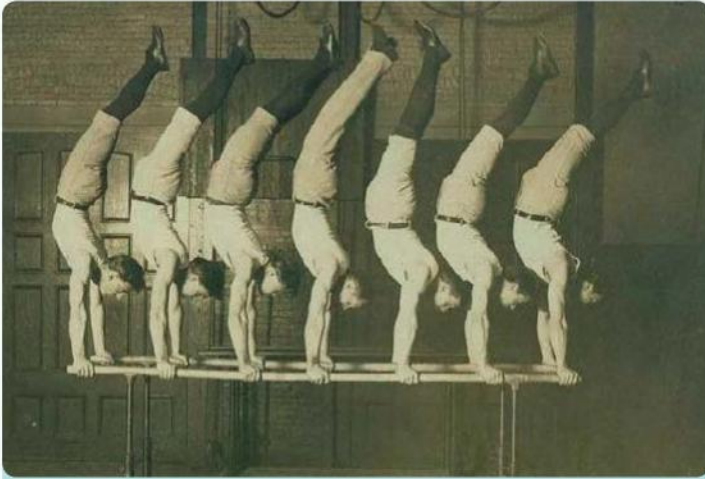


↑ *Considered the best Gymnastics team in history, the Soviet Union eased to Team Competition gold at Seoul 1988.*

## SOVIET STRONGMEN

The Soviet Union men's team at Seoul 1988 is widely recognised as the greatest Gymnastics team in the Games' history. They recorded six perfect 'ten' scores, including three by Dmitri Bilozertchev, who three years earlier had broken his left leg in 42 places in a road accident. Valeri Lyukin achieved the highest possible score on the Pommel Horse and Parallel Bars, while Vladimir Artemov was awarded ten for his work on the Horizontal Bar. Both Lyukin and Artemov subsequently emigrated to the United States. The margin of the Soviet's victory in Seoul was all the more impressive as East German Holger Behrendt and Japanese duo Daisuke Nishikava and Koichi Mizushima also achieved the ultimate score, each on the Rings. 'It is the best display of team gymnastics I have ever seen,' said Peter Vidmar, a member of the United States team that had won the gold medal four years earlier in Los Angeles.





↑ A wooden leg proved no handicap for George Eyser (centre): the United States' athlete picked up three gold medals at St Louis 1904.

## EYSER OVERCOMES HANDICAP

At St Louis 1904, United States won the first men's Team Competition. George Eyser was a leading member of that squad, also winning gold in the Parallel Bars and Vault competitions. Eyser's achievements were all the more remarkable ... because he had a wooden leg.

## THE ULTIMATE TEAM PLAYER

Japan was the powerhouse of men's gymnastics in the 1960s and 1970s. At the 1976 Games in Montreal, 'the land of the rising sun' was going for a fifth straight Team Competition title. However, disaster struck when Shun Fujimoto injured himself on the floor, sustaining a broken kneecap. Showing incredible team spirit and will to win, Fujimoto hid the extent of his injury and completed his final two events. On the rings he scored 9.7, executing a dismount despite his ailment. His score helped the Japanese to yet another gold.

## CHILD STAR

The first modern Olympic Games in 1896 saw team events held for each individual apparatus rather than across multiple disciplines. Unlike today, there was no age restriction on competitors. Greece's Dimitrios Loundras was just ten years and 218 days old when he won a silver medal in the team Parallel Bars.

➔ Shun Fujimoto produced one of the most courageous performances in sporting history at Montreal 1976 when he defied a broken kneecap to compete in the final two rounds to help Japan to men's Team Competition gold.



## SELARIU'S COSTLY SLIP

At the 2004 Games in Athens, Romania, who had never won men's Team Competition gold at the Games, were leading going into the final piece of apparatus. The narrow margins of victory and defeat in this technical sport were then summed up by the luckless Razvan Selariu, who fell off the Horizontal Bar to allow Japan to snatch the title, their first in the event for 28 years.

⬅ Romania's mission to take Team Competition gold for the first time in its history at Athens 2004 failed when they slipped from first to third in the final round.



## CHINESE FIREWORKS

The 1984 Games in Los Angeles saw the first appearance of a team from mainland China at the Summer Games for 32 years. Its star performer was male gymnast Ning Li, who picked up six medals – three golds, two silvers and one bronze. Li's duel with Peter Vidmar for the Pommel Horse crown was one of the highlights of the action in the Pauley Pavilion. The astounded judges could not split them.

## BLANIK BREAKS THE MOULD

Only one non-Chinese male gymnast claimed a title at Beijing 2008. Leszek Blanik secured Poland's first-ever Gymnastics gold medal at the Olympic Games with a supreme display of vaulting beyond even the impressive hosts. The only gymnast who was able to match Blanik was Thomas Bouhail of France. He equalled Blanik's score, but was only awarded the silver medal on a tie-break analysis of the judges' marks.

**"BLANIK SECURED POLAND'S FIRST GYMNASTICS GOLD"**



← Polish vaulter Leszek Blanik was the surprise winner of the gold medal in the Vault competition at Beijing 2008.



↑ Nobody could touch Japan's Sawao Kato on the Parallel Bars at Munich 1972 and Montreal 1976.

## KATO FIRST BAR NONE

Japan's Sawao Kato won a record eight Gymnastics gold medals across three Games from 1968 to 1976. He remains the only man to date to have successfully defended the Parallel Bars title.

## TSUKAHARA MAKES HIS MARK

Innovation is celebrated in gymnastics, with new techniques and moves named after their instigators. Perhaps the most famous example is the legendary Japanese gymnast Misuo Tsukahara, who claimed back-to-back Horizontal Bar titles at the 1972 and 1976 Games and is still the only man to have retained that crown. Tsukahara appeared to be fearless and both his somersault dismount from the high bar and his complex cartwheel vault were added to the Gymnastics skills manual in his honour.

↓ Misuo Tsukahara performs his legendary dismount from the Horizontal Bar at Munich 1972.





## UCHIMURA ROCKS FOR JAPAN

Kohei Uchimura added Olympic gold in the men's Individual All-Around to the world titles he had claimed over the previous three years. His domination was such that the gold medal was all but his by the halfway point. Uchimura's score of 92.690 was more than 1.5 points ahead of silver medallist Marcel Nguyen of Germany. Yet the Japanese star had been off-colour in qualifying during which he finished ninth after falling off both the High Bar and the Pommel Horse. 'He's been a rock the last four years and really deserved that gold medal,' said Britain's Kristian Thomas. 'I had no doubt he'd bring his A game.'

👉 *Kohei Uchimura continued Japan's long run of success in men's Gymnastics with a gold medal in the Individual All-Around Competition at London 2012.*



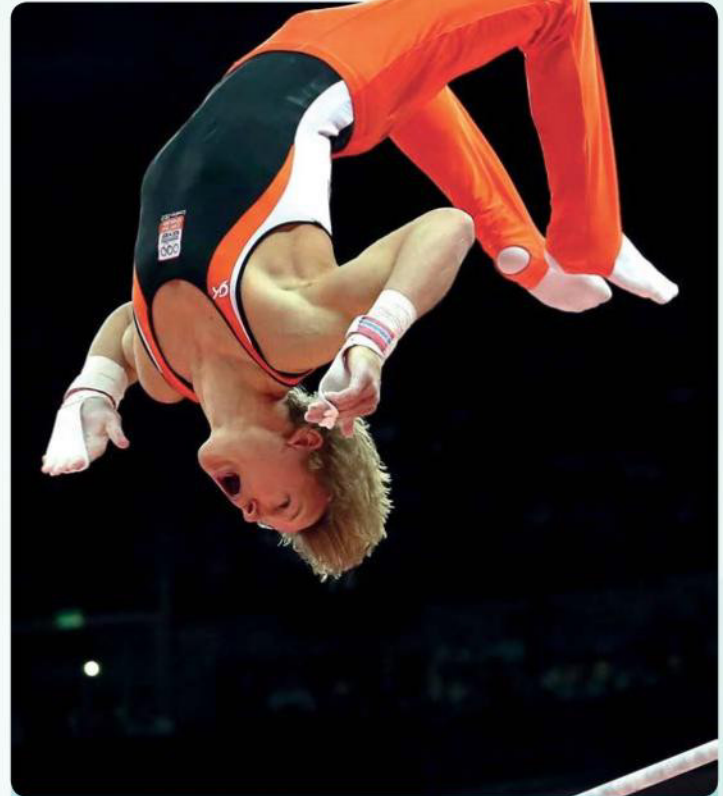
## BRITS END LONG WAIT

Great Britain won their first men's Olympic Gymnastics Team Competition medal in a century when they claimed bronze at London 2012. Louis Smith, Max Whitlock, Daniel Purvis, Sam Oldham and Kristian Thomas totalled 271.711 points in front of a royal audience that included Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, and Prince Harry. Britain had initially been awarded silver, but an inquiry into the score of Kohei Uchimura's Pommel Horse routine saw Japan claim silver and Britain downgraded to bronze. This was Britain's first Olympic Gymnastics Team Competition medal since they took bronze at Stockholm 1912. China retained the title they had won at Beijing 2008, with Japan leapfrogging Britain to win the silver medal with an upgraded total of 271.952.

**“BRITAIN HAD INITIALLY BEEN AWARDED SILVER, BUT AN INQUIRY INTO KOHEI UCHIMURA'S ROUTINE SAW THEM DOWNGRADED”**

## INDIVIDUAL APPARATUS CHAMPIONS

There are six apparatus disciplines. The Floor exhibits tumbling and strength skills. The Horizontal Bar, 2.5 metres above the ground, sees swings, releases and twists. The Parallel Bars involves swings, balances and releases performed on two bars 42 centimetres apart. The Pommel Horse sees gymnasts perform on top of a gym 'horse' with two rings attached. The Rings (suspended at 5 metres) tests strength, power and flexibility. The Vault sees gymnasts sprinting down a runway and leaping from a springboard to perform twists, somersaults and a landing.



👈 *Epke Zonderland of the Netherlands lived up to his dreams when he won the gold medal in the men's Horizontal Bar Competition at London 2012.*

## 'FLYING DUTCHMAN' SURPRISES HIMSELF

Epke Zonderland produced a real-life 'Flying Dutchman' performance to win the Horizontal Bar competition at London 2012 and bring the Netherlands the country's first-ever Gymnastics gold medal. To achieve this, Zonderland outdid Beijing 2008 champion Kai Zou, who had been the favourite, especially as China had won every Olympic Games and world title on the apparatus since 2008. Zonderland's breathtaking routine saw him surpass Zou with ease and the Chinese star was even pushed down to the bronze-medal position by Germany's Fabian Hambuechen. Zonderland said: 'I dreamed about this for so long. It's unique to be in an Olympic final if you're a Dutch gymnast, but winning the gold is bizarre.'



# WOMEN'S ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS

From Olga Korbut to Nadia Comaneci, women's Gymnastics has produced some of the most legendary names in the history of the Olympic Games. Team competitions were contested for the first time at Amsterdam 1928, with individual competitions introduced at Helsinki 1952. The Soviet Union were the dominant force over the years, winning 33 gold medals.

## TEN-UP NADIA

Nadia Comaneci of Romania became the Games' youngest women's All-Around Gymnastics champion at Montreal 1976 when she astounded the world with her skill at the tender age of 14. She took the gold medal in the Balance Beam and Uneven Bars apparatus finals, achieving an unprecedented seven perfect 'ten' scores in the process. No gymnast had previously been awarded a single ten in the Gymnastics Competition at the Games. Comaneci raised standards to a new level and her prowess led to revisions of the judging criteria.

➡ *Nadia Comaneci's performance on the Balance Beam at Montreal 1976 sent shockwaves around the sporting world.*

## HEIGHT MATTERS

Halfway through the women's All-Around competition at the 2000 Games in Sydney, Australian gymnast Allana Slater questioned whether the vaulting horse was at the correct height. She was right: the apparatus was 5 centimetres below the prescribed height of 125cm. The horse was raised and all of the gymnasts who had already vaulted the horse when it was at the wrong height were offered the opportunity to retake their vault. It was too late for many, though, as the likes of Svetlana Khorkina had done badly on the incorrectly set horse and subsequently produced poor scores in their later disciplines because they had been under the extra pressure of knowing that a further mistake would ruin their chances of victory.

## CASLAVSKA TRIUMPHS

Vera Caslavka was the first true female Gymnastics superstar. Representing Czechoslovakia at Mexico City 1968, just two months after her country had been invaded by the Soviet Union, the charismatic Caslavka defeated all the mighty Soviet squad in her successful defence of the Individual All-Around title she had won at Tokyo 1964. Her amazing career over those two Games brought a stunning total of 11 medals. Caslavka had been forced into hiding when Soviet tanks rolled into Prague, but at the Games she gained inspiration from the strife back home. Afterwards, she presented the four gold medals she had won in Mexico to her country's ousted leaders.

## KIM PROVES A POINT

Nellie Kim defied the opinion of Soviet gymnastics legend Larisa Latynina (who, when Kim was a child, said she had no future in the sport) to become one of the most celebrated gymnasts of all time. In her much-storied battle with Nadia Comaneci at Montreal 1976, she took three gold medals (in the Team All-Around, the Vault and the Floor – recording a perfect ten in the latter). She also took silver in the Individual All-Around event, despite becoming the first gymnast to record a perfect ten on the Vault. Four years later, at Moscow 1980, she shared gold with Comaneci in the Floor and won the fifth gold of her Olympic career in the Team All-Around.

➡ *The elegant Nellie Kim won three gold medals at Montreal 1976.*







↑ Nastia Liukin emulated her father's success with gold at Beijing 2008.

## KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

Nastia Liukin, the 2008 Individual All-Around champion, was following in a proud family tradition that crossed not only eras but also political history when she claimed the gold medal in Beijing. Both her parents were champion gymnasts. Liukin's father, Valery, was a member of the 1988 Soviet Union team in Seoul and won gold medals in the Team and Individual Horizontal Bar events. Her mother is former world rhythmic champion Anna Kotchneva. Liukin emigrated to the United States in 1992 aged two and was coached to success by her father at his renowned gymnastics academy in Texas.

## RETTON'S DRAMATIC VICTORY

Most of the Eastern European nations, including the awesome Soviet team, boycotted the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. Their absence allowed the United States to claim the women's Individual title through the charismatic Mary Lou Retton – but only just. In an incredible finish, Retton needed to score a perfect 'ten' on the Balance Beam to deny Romania's Ecaterina Szabo. She achieved it and became a national hero.

➔ Mary Lou Retton produced a perfect final routine under pressure at Los Angeles 1984 to edge out Romania's Ecaterina Szabo for the gold medal.



## ALL-AROUND CHAMPIONS

The women's Individual All-Around title is awarded to the gymnast with the highest score across all four women's disciplines – Floor, Balance Beam, Uneven Bars and Vault. The leading performers from the Team event, up to a maximum of two per nation, qualify for the Individual All-Around Final, in which they perform the four routines. The marks gained used to be added to their scores from the Team competition, but in recent years the champion has been decided solely on performances in the final. The champion is the competitor with the most points.

## LATYNINA ON CLOUD NINE

Larisa Latynina of the Soviet Union, the 1956 and 1960 Individual All-Around champion, won nine Gymnastics gold medals in her Olympic Games career, a record for a female competitor in any sport. Latynina travelled to London 2012, at which she watched her total of 18 medals eclipsed by legendary swimmer Michael Phelps. The American also owns the record for most golds with 18. The grace and artistry Latynina displayed evolved from her training as a ballet dancer from the age of 11.

## PATTERSON DENIES KHORKINA

At Athens 2004, American Carly Patterson ensured that Svetlana Khorkina would be remembered as arguably the greatest gymnast never to have won the Individual All-Around title at the Games. Khorkina had won the World Championship on three occasions, but in 1996 and 2000 had failed to achieve the ultimate prize in the sport – and this was her last chance. Khorkina led at the halfway stage, but slipped back to second after the Balance Beam, allowing 16-year-old Patterson to swoop.

⬅ Russia's Svetlana Khorkina was a three-time world champion who never managed to hit the same golden heights at the Olympic Games.

“KHORKINA  
FAILED TO  
ACHIEVE THE  
ULTIMATE  
PRIZE IN THE  
SPORT,  
FALLING  
SHORT IN  
1996, 2000  
AND 2004”







### TEAM CHAMPIONS

Team honours in women's Gymnastics at the Olympic Games are decided on a similar basis to the men's equivalent. During qualifying, five of the six gymnasts on each team perform on each apparatus, with the highest four marks counting. The scores determine which teams advance to the final and which individual gymnasts reach the Individual All-Around and apparatus finals. In the final, three of each team compete on each apparatus, with all three scores counted. The team with the highest overall tally wins the gold medal.

↑ *The Netherlands' gymnasts delighted the home crowd by taking the inaugural team title at the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam.*







## JUST PERFECT

Before 1976, no male or female gymnast had ever achieved Gymnastics perfection at the Olympic Games. At Montreal 1976, Nadia Comaneci scored seven perfect tens, including two on the Uneven Bars. It was on this apparatus that she made history by being awarded her first maximum on 18 July 1976. Her feat was replicated by fellow Romanian Daniela Silivas at Seoul 1988.

## TRAGIC FIRST CHAMPS

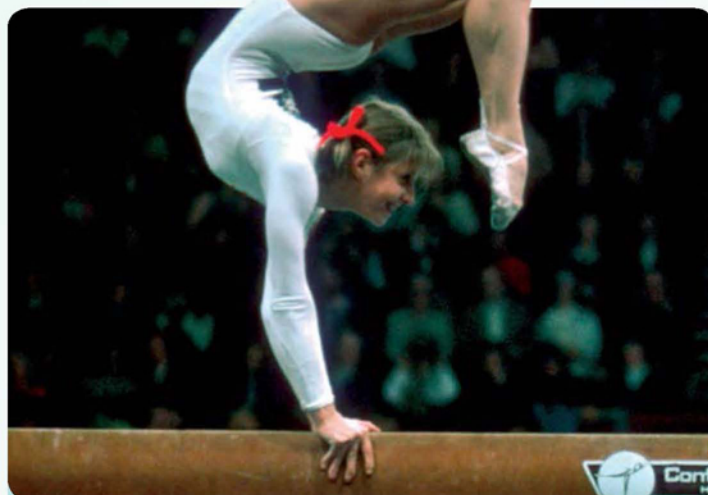
The Team title was the first of the women's events to be accorded medal status, at the 1928 Games in Amsterdam. There was delight for the hosts as the Dutch became the first-ever women's Gymnastics Team champions. However, within 15 years four of the 12-strong line-up were dead – Ans Polak, Jud Simons, Helena Nordheim and Estella Agsteribbe all perished during the Second World War in Nazi concentration camps. Elka de Levie was the only Jewish member of the team to survive the Holocaust.

**“TRAGICALLY, FOUR OF THE DUTCH TEAM PERISHED”**

## SUPER SZABO

In the Soviet Union's absence, the 1984 women's Gymnastics competition developed into a contest between the United States and Romania. Home favourite Mary-Lou Retton took the All-Around title, but Romania won the Team title and Ekaterina Szabo stole the show in the apparatus finals, winning the Floor and Vault Competitions, plus sharing the Balance Beam crown with team-mate Simona Pauca. Szabo's four golds equalled the record for a woman gymnast at one Games.

◀ *Although she missed out on the All-Around title to Mary Lou Retton, Ekaterina Szabo struck gold a record four times at Los Angeles 1984.*



↑ *Olga Korbut won three gold medals at the Munich 1972 Olympic Games: on the Balance Beam, on the Floor and as part of the victorious Soviet team.*

## CAPTIVATING KORBUT

Olga Korbut was arguably the first gymnast to earn worldwide stardom. At just 17, Korbut stole the show at the 1972 Games in Munich. Her impish displays on the Floor earned her a gold medal to add to the one she had won for her virtuoso Balance Beam routines, which were rated the best on show. Korbut was edged out into silver by East German Karin Janz in the Uneven Bars, but her standing back flip to catch onto the apparatus was considered a move before its time. The Soviet star's nerve, coupled with her flashing smile, brought a brief thaw to the Cold War.

## INDIVIDUAL APPARATUS CHAMPIONS

Women compete in four disciplines: the 10-centimetre-wide Balance Beam, which tests the gymnast's acrobatic and dancing skills; the Floor, a combination of tumbling and moves to music; the Uneven Bars, in which gymnasts perform a routine on bars set at heights of 241cm and 161cm and 130–150cm apart; and the Vault, in which gymnasts run, twist and turn in the air and perform a landing.

## CHINA AT THE DOUBLE

China's women's team captain Linlin Deng won the gold medal in the Beam competition at London 2012, ahead of team-mate Lu Sui who won silver. This was the only one-two finish in Artistic Gymnastics at the 2012 Games and represented Deng's second Olympic gold medal, having been part of China's Team success at Beijing 2008. The 20-year-old, who finished on 15.600 points, led the event from start to finish after pre-Olympic favourite Gabby Douglas fell, finishing last. World champion Sui won silver with a score of 15.500, while Alexandra Raisman of the United States was awarded bronze. Romania's Catalina Ponor matched Raisman's total of 15.066 points, but she lost out on a medal as the American scored better in the tie-breaking countback of execution.



## ORDER RESTORED

The United States women put on a dominant display as they won Team Competition gold at London 2012 ahead of China, Romania and the Russian Federation – the latter taking silver. Romania and China fought it out for the bronze medal, with Romania winning it on the Vault in the last rotation. The USA's success was built on consistency, starting with McKayla Maroney's 16.23 Vault score, the highest of the day. Gabby Douglas, Jordyn Wieber and Alexandra Raisman all scored 15.0 or above in their climactic floor exercises. This was only the second time the US women had won a Team Competition gold in Artistic Gymnastics. The last time they had done so, at Atlanta 1996, the same three countries – the USA, Russian Federation and Romania – had medalled in the same order.



← Beth Tweddle, Great Britain's most successful gymnast ever, had won four World Championships but no Olympic Games medals, until she collected a bronze in the Uneven Bars competition at London 2012.

## BRONZE AND FAREWELL

Beth Tweddle finally won a medal in the final Olympic Games appearance of her phenomenal Artistic Gymnastics career. The British 27-year-old's score of 15.916 at London 2012 took bronze in the Uneven Bars competition. She had won four world titles and was the most decorated British gymnast ever, but an Olympic medal had eluded her. The Russian Federation's Aliya Mustafina won gold ahead of Beijing 2008 champion Kexin He of China. Tweddle might have finished in silver medal place herself but for a step back on landing. She said later: 'Everyone kept saying to me: "You're a great champ, it doesn't matter what happens today." I kept trying to tell myself that, but I knew if I walked out of here without a medal, I'd have been really disappointed, because this is definitely my last Olympic Games.'



↑ Team captain Alexandra Raisman of the United States slipped out of contention to hand team-mate Gabby Douglas the All-Around Competition gold medal at London 2012.

## FLYING SQUIRREL'S GOLD HORDE

At London 2012, Gabrielle 'Gabby' Douglas – also known as the 'Flying Squirrel' – became the first African-American to win the women's Individual All-Around Competition gold. Her display was rated as the most striking for an United States woman since Mary Lou Retton at Los Angeles 1984. At the start of the year, Douglas had ranked third in the United States, behind world champion Jordyn Wieber and team captain Alexandra Raisman. But Wieber failed to qualify and Raisman slipped out of contention. Douglas then stepped up to head two contestants from the Russian Federation and win the United States' third successive gold in the event. Praise for Douglas could come no higher than that which came from Olympic Games Gymnastics icon Nadia Comaneci, who described Douglas's performance as 'exceptional, unbelievable'.



# RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS

Only women compete in Rhythmic Gymnastics, with individual competitors executing choreographed movements to music using five types of apparatus: rope, hoop, ball, clubs and ribbon. In the Group Competition, teams of six gymnasts complete one routine with five ribbons and another with three hoops and two balls. Two panels of judges award points for each performance.

## RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON TOP

The Russian Federation dominates Rhythmic Gymnastics, with its gymnasts taking gold at the last four Olympic Games. Evgeniya Kanaeva was the third successive Russian winner at Beijing 2008, when identical scores of 18.850 with the rope and hoop and a superb club routine earned her the highest rating of any display in the final – 18.950. It was a performance to make the inhabitants of Kanaeva's home city of Omsk in western Siberia very proud, coming four years after another woman from Omsk won the silver in the Individual Competition – Irina Tchachina. Inna Zhukova of Belarus won the silver this time round, and Ukraine's Anna Bessonova claimed the bronze to ensure that all the Individual All-Around Competition medallists came from former Soviet Union nations.

## FUNG THE FIRST

In Rhythmic Gymnastics more than most sports the rare absence of Eastern Europeans has a devastating effect on the pecking order. Such a phenomenon happened in 1984, when the withdrawal of the Soviet Union and most of the Warsaw Pact countries from the Olympic Games drastically lowered the quality of the Rhythmic field. Thus the fact that the first Rhythmic Gymnastics gold was

↓ *Canada's Lori Fung, champion at Los Angeles 1984, remains the only non-Eastern European Rhythmic All-Around gold-medal winner to date.*

won by a Canadian remains an anomaly. Lori Fung, from Vancouver, edged to the top of the podium ahead of Romania's Doina Stanculescu. In the World Championships the following year, Fung could only finish ninth.

## LITTLE MISS PERFECT

Perfection is always sought in sport, but rarely achieved. According to the judges at the 1988 Games in Seoul, Rhythmic gymnast Marina Lobach achieved it. The Belarussian (competing under the Soviet flag) received a perfect 'ten' for all of her routines during the qualifying and the final rounds of the All-Around Competition. Others were also given the ultimate score during the finals, but none could match Lobach over both phases of the event. Her score of 60.000 is her sport's equivalent of a hole-in-one at golf or a 147 in snooker. Silver medallist Adriana Dunavska came so close to glory (59.950), but you just can't beat perfection. Lobach was a phenomenon – the youngest Rhythmic Gymnastics champion at the Games, she retired the following year at the grand old age of 19.

## THE APPARATUS

**Rope:** Made of hemp or a synthetic material, the rope must be proportional to the gymnast's height. It can be swung and circled during the routine, which requires jumping and explosive movements.

**Hoop:** Made of plastic or wood, the hoop has an interior diameter of 80–90 centimetres and must weigh at least 300 grams. Favoured movements include rolls over the body or on the floor, rotations around the hand, throws and catches and passing over or through the hoop. It offers the greatest variety of movements and technical skills. Any vibration of the hoop in the air is penalised.

**Ball:** Made of rubber or a synthetic material, the ball is 18–20cm in diameter and weighs 400g. It is thrown, caught, bounced and rolled over the body or on the floor, but no grip is allowed as the movement should be 'flowing and sensuous'.

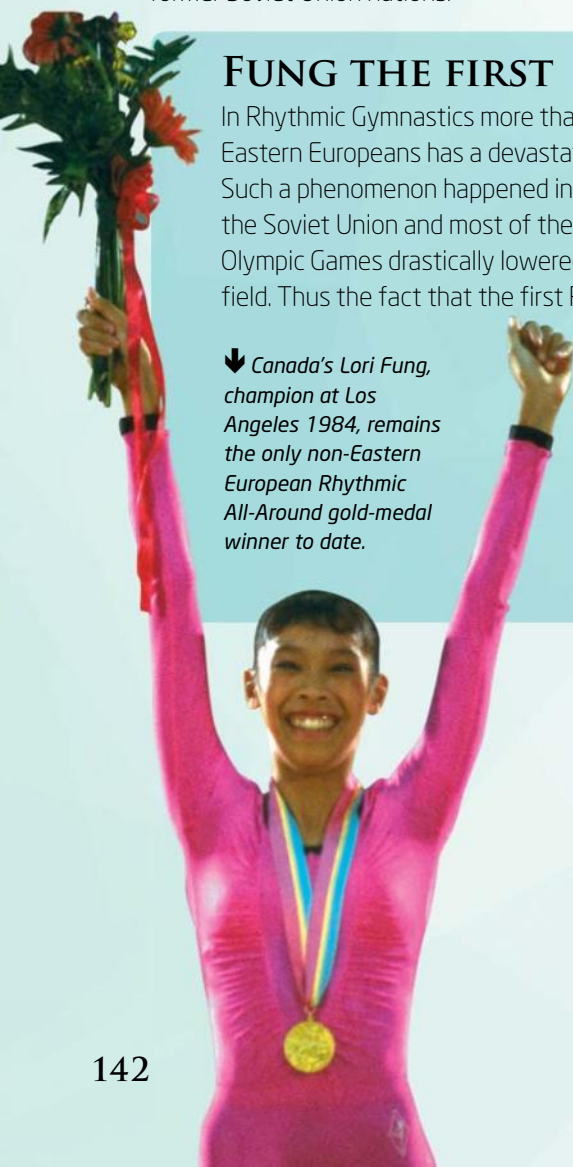
**Clubs:** Made of wood or a synthetic material, the clubs are 40–50cm long, weigh 150g each and are circled, thrown, caught and tapped.

**Ribbon:** Made of satin and at least 6m long, the ribbon is held by a stick to enable the gymnast to circle, spiral, throw and catch. Any knots in the ribbon are penalised.

## LATE DEVELOPER

Rhythmic Gymnastics began in the former Soviet Union in the 1940s before it was officially recognised as a competitive event in 1961. It became part of the Olympic Games programme in Los Angeles in 1984, and the Group Competition was introduced 12 years later at the Atlanta 1996 Games.

**"LOBACH RECEIVED A PERFECT 'TEN' FOR ALL OF HER ROUTINES IN SEOUL"**







↑ A slip-up for Russia's Yanina Batyrchina - she dropped the ribbon - cost her a chance of a Rhythmic Gymnastics All-Around gold medal at Atlanta 1996.

## RIBBON RUINS IT

Just as one punch in Boxing or a throw in Judo can mean instant heartbreak for a potential gold medallist, so a dropped ribbon can do the same in Rhythmic Gymnastics. At Atlanta 1996, Russia's Yanina Batyrchina was duelling for the title with the Ukraine's Ekaterina Serebryanskaya going into the final discipline. Alas for Batyrchina, the stick tied to the satin slipped through her fingers and her chance at gold had gone. Serebryanskaya was not faultless herself with the ribbon, but her errors were not as cataclysmic as Batyrchina's, who had effectively 'dropped the baton'. Serebryanskaya became the first Rhythmic gymnast to hold the European, World and Olympic Games All-Around gold medals at the same time - a feat equalled by Russia's Alina Kabayeva eight years later.

## OLD AT 22

The sheer flexibility required to compete at the highest level in Rhythmic Gymnastics means that athletes are already considered too old at an age when they would be nowhere near their peak in most other sports. At Sydney 2000, aged 21, Yulia Barsakova became Rhythmic Gymnastics' oldest gold medallist in the sport. Her big moment came at the expense of Alina Kabaeva, who would succeed her at Athens 2004. The age record fell at London 2012, to 22-year-old Evgeniya Kanaeva.

↓ Yulia Barsakova (centre), aged 21, took All-Around gold at Sydney 2000.



## KANAEVA THE DANCING QUEEN

At London 2012, Evgeniya Kanaeva made history when she became the first rhythmic gymnast to defend her Olympic Individual All-Around title. The 22-year-old was in a class of her own, scoring 116.900 to leave fellow Russian Federation team member Daria Dmitrieva with the silver medal and Liubou Charkashyna of Belarus with bronze. The three-time world champion took an instant lead after the opening hoop and then followed up with grace and style, illuminating her routines with the ball, clubs and ribbon. The secret of her success is nothing more than dedication and hard work. Kanaeva said: 'Gymnastics has been part of my life since I was six. Since that time I have practised every day, eight hours a day.'

↓ The Russian Federation continued to dominate the Rhythmic Gymnastics Group Competition, winning a fourth consecutive gold at London 2012.



## TEAM GB MAKE A START

Great Britain's success at London 2012 in the Rhythmic Gymnastics Group Competition was merely in being there. They made their competition debut after winning an appeal against their own federation and then funding their preparation through raffles and sponsored skips. Britain finished 12th and last in the qualifying stage, but close enough behind Germany and Canada to feel their efforts had been justified. Lynne Hutchison said: 'We definitely deserved to be here and we proved that by coming that close to Canada. We weren't expected to beat anyone here, but to come that close shows we can compete with Olympic countries.' Ice dance champions Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean, gold-medal winners at the 1984 Winter Olympic Games in Sarajevo, had originally mentored the team and had provided some input with their choreography.



# TRAMPOLINE

The trampoline was invented in 1935 by Americans George Nilsen and Larry Griswold. They bolted together an iron frame and attached a piece of canvas to it using springs. The name comes from the Spanish word 'trampolin', meaning springboard. Trampoline became a mainstream competitive activity when the International Trampoline Federation merged with the International Gymnastics Federation in 1999.

## HE MAKES CHINESE BREAKTHROUGH

He Wenna won China's first-ever gold medal in Trampoline at her home Games in Beijing in 2008. She finished ahead of Canada's Karen Cockburn by 0.80 points. Ekaterina Khilko struck a blow for Uzbekistan when she claimed the bronze, the country's first medal in Trampoline. Germany's Anna Dogonadze, the 2004 gold medallist, fell midway through her routine and finished fourth, while Sydney 2000 winner, Russia's Irina Karavaeva, ended in fifth.

👉 *He Wenna became China's first-ever Trampoline champion when she took gold at Beijing 2008.*



## KARAVAEVA KICKS IT OFF

One of the trampoline's original inventors, George Nilsen, then 86 years old, was there in person to see Russia's Irina Karavaeva enter the record books as the inaugural women's Individual Olympic gold medallist in the sport, thanks to her trailblazing success at Sydney 2000. Ukraine's Oxana Tsyhuleva took silver and Canada's Karen Cockburn bronze, before admitting to an unusual phobia for a trampolinist: 'It's an adrenaline rush. I'm actually afraid of heights... But it's a different feeling on the trampoline.' Germany's Anna Dogonadze led after the qualification round, but bounced off the trampoline during her final routine to rule herself out of contention for a medal.

## NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

Trampolinists are judged by a panel on the technical difficulty and execution of their moves. There are two phases to each competition, qualification and the final. The qualification round has two routines. The first must include special requirements, the second is voluntary. The top eight from these two routines qualify for the final. Scores from the qualification round do not carry over to the final, which has one voluntary routine, with the highest scorer declared the winner. Synchronised Trampoline, a feature of the World Games, has yet to make its competition debut at the Olympic Games.



## MAGNIFICENT MOSKALENKO

Alexander Moskalenko has been the foremost competitor in the history of trampoline. The Russian 'king of spring' dominated the sport in the 1990s and early 2000s, winning five world titles and the first men's Olympic Games title at Sydney 2000. He won the 1990 and 1992 World Championships and then, at the age of 22, decided to retire, unable to find 'the right motivation'. His absence did not last long, as he came back to secure the 1994 global crown before again leaving the scene. The news that Trampoline would make its Olympic Games debut in 2000 was too much of a lure for Moskalenko, and he prepared by claiming a fourth world title in 1999. Sydney was the stage for the greatest display in the sport's history, as Moskalenko utterly outclassed the opposition in the final, winning by the enormous margin of 2.40 points in a sport where often fractions of a point make the difference. He concluded a career that compares to any of the all-time greats in other sports by claiming the 2001 World Championship and the 2002 European title, after which he was only denied the 2003 world crown on a tie-break and narrowly lost in the final at Athens 2004.

👆 *Alexander Moskalenko took home a men's Trampoline silver medal from Athens 2004 to add to his gold from Sydney 2000.*





↑ *Irina Karavaeva's defence of her women's Individual title ended abruptly when she finished 15th out of 16 in qualifying at Athens 2004.*

## GREEK TRAGEDY FOR KARAVAEVA

Reigning women's Individual champion Irina Karavaeva endured a disastrous defence of her title at the 2004 Games in Athens. The Russian finished in 15th place, second last, at the end of the qualifying routines to miss out on the chance to progress to the final. Germany's Anna Dogonadze went on to claim gold, with the then world champion Karen Cockburn from Canada having to settle for silver and China's Shanshan Huang bronze. Dogonadze became the first non-Russian to win Trampoline gold at the Olympic Games, although her heritage ties her to the former Soviet Union. She was born in Mtskheta, the former capital of Georgia, and represented that country from 1992 to 1997. Prior to Georgia's independence, she had competed under the Soviet banner, but on marrying her former coach she became a German citizen.

## MACLENNAN OUT ON HER OWN

Rosannagh MacLennan returned to Canada with the country's only gold medal from the London 2012 in the women's Trampoline Individual Competition after Chinese favourite He Wenna fell on her last move. MacLennan's gold was also Canada's first in the women's Trampoline Individual Competition. The 23-year-old's score of 57.305 had already edged her past another Chinese favourite, Shanshan Huang, so when Beijing 2008 champion He stumbled, MacLennan knew she had won gold. MacLennan, who had finished seventh four years earlier, had started fifth in the finals round, but rose to the challenge to record the best marks of her career. She thought that winning gold might allow her a small treat – 'maybe a little chocolate' she said after winning gold.

## NIKITIN NICKS IT

At the 2004 Games in Athens, Ukraine's Yuri Nikitin claimed the men's title by the narrowest of margins. Nikitin finished just 0.3 points ahead of his fierce rival and five-time world champion Alexander Moskalenko from Russia.

**"LU SCORED 41.00 TO WIN GOLD, SHOWING SUPERIOR STYLE WHILE EXECUTING AN EASIER ROUTINE"**

## CHINA'S LU DOUBLES UP

The day after He Wenna's triumph at Beijing 2008, Chunlong Lu followed her example to become the first Chinese man to win the men's Individual Trampoline title. Lu, the top qualifier for the final, scored 41.00 to win gold, showing superior style while executing a slightly easier routine than Jason Burnett, who won the silver, the best result in the sport for a Canadian man. Lu's team-mate Dong Dong, at 19 the youngest competitor in the final, took bronze.

## DONG BOUNCES BACK

China's Dong Dong bounced past the Russia Federation's Dmitry Ushakov to upgrade his Beijing 2008 bronze to gold at London 2012 to reward his competitive consistency in the men's Trampoline Individual Competition. Dong, who defied injury fears, had been individual runner-up at the 2007 World Championships in Quebec. Bronze at Beijing 2008 was followed by individual victory in the 2009 World Championships in St Petersburg. Ushakov had thought he had a realistic prospect of gold after the qualification round, but Dong, who had finished third in qualifying, then but surprised the Russian by stepping up the difficulty level of his routines.

➔ *Dong Dong, the 2009 world champion, produced a superb final routine to take the men's Trampoline gold medal at London 2012.*





# COMBAT SPORTS

Some of the hardest-fought sporting contests on Earth can be found in the Olympic Games' event programme

↓ Nicola Adams (left) made history at London 2012 when she became the first woman to win an Olympic Boxing gold medal. The 29-year-old from Yorkshire was the first of three British boxers to win gold.









# BOXING

With the exception of 1912 (because Swedish law banned the sport at the time), Boxing has been contested at every Olympic Games since 1904. Several of the sport's all-time greats – including Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, George Foreman and Lennox Lewis – have used their gold medal-winning exploits at the Olympics as a springboard to greatness on the professional circuit.

## PATTERSON STEPS UP

Floyd Patterson, who would later become the youngest-ever professional world heavy weight champion, won Middle Weight gold at the 1952 Games. During his pro career, he would twice encounter the silver medallist in the Heavy Weight division at those Games, Ingemar Johansson, winning once and losing once to the Swede for the world heavy weight title.



## ALI'S SHINING LIGHT

Muhammad Ali, the gold-medal winner at Light Heavy Weight at the 1960 Games in Rome, remains one of the all-time Games greats. Ali, then a brash 18-year-old boxing under his original name, Cassius Clay, was the outstanding boxer of those Games, and his subsequent career underlined the notion that gold-medal success as an amateur can be a springboard to a successful professional career. Ali is such an iconic sporting figure (so much so that he is widely regarded as one of the most recognisable figures of the 20th century) that it was no surprise he was chosen to light the Cauldron at the Opening Ceremony at Atlanta 1996 and that he was given a role in the flag presentations at London 2012.

↑ *Cassius Clay proves too strong for Australia's Tony Madigan in the semi-finals of the Light Heavy Weight event at Rome 1960.*

## SAVON THE SUCCESSOR

Following his retirement, Teofilio Stevenson became Cuba's national boxing coach. His team's star performer was Felix Savon, who went on to match his hero by winning Super Heavy Weight gold in 1992, 1996 and 2000. Savon was formidable, standing 6ft 5in (1.96m) tall and with a reach of more than 2m. He dominated amateur boxing, and won six world amateur championships from 1986, before retiring after Sydney 2000. Felix's son, Erislandy, boxed at London 2012, but lost on points to eventual Super Heavy Weight (+91 kg) champion Anthony Joshua.

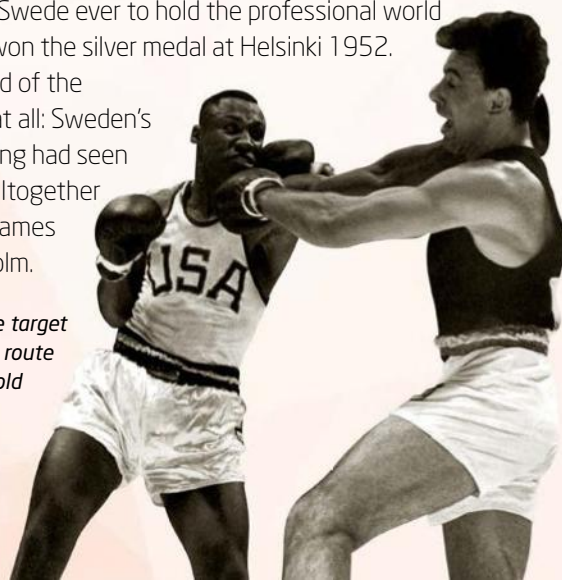
## BEST OF BRITISH

Born on 1 June 1892, London policeman Harry Mallin was the British ABA Middle Weight champion in 1919 and 1920 and had his first taste of the Olympic Games at Antwerp 1920. He cruised through to the final, in which he faced Art Preud'Homme – a French-Canadian soldier who had won all of his previous bouts by knockout. Mallin won on points to take gold. At Paris 1924, Mallin began the defence of his title at the Velodrome d'Hiver with two straightforward victories, won a controversial quarter-final fight against French hero Roger Brousse, out-pointed Belgium's Joseph Beecken in the semi-final, before beating compatriot John Elliot on points in the final. In doing so, Mallin had become the first boxer, at any weight, to defend a title at the Games and remains the only British boxer ever to have won two Boxing gold medals.

## LENNOX LEWIS'S SPRINGBOARD

The big boys who have won Boxing medals at the Olympic Games have regularly featured future professional world champions among their ranks. The 1988 Super Heavy Weight final was a gripping contest between two future heavy weight champions of the world, with Lennox Lewis, then representing Canada, defeating Riddick Bowe, of the USA. Other medallists who have gone on to win professional world titles include Joe Frazier and George Foreman, both of the USA, who won the Heavy Weight gold medal in 1964 and 1968 respectively, and Wladimir Klitschko, of Ukraine, who won Super Heavy Weight gold at Atlanta 1996. Ingemar Johansson, the only Swede ever to hold the professional world heavy weight title, won the silver medal at Helsinki 1952. He was probably glad of the opportunity to box at all: Sweden's national ban on boxing had seen the sport excluded altogether in 1912 when the Games were held in Stockholm.

➔ *Joe Frazier finds the target against Hans Huber en route to the Heavy Weight gold medal at Tokyo 1964.*





## STEVENSON'S AMATEUR ETHOS

Cuba's three-time gold medallist Teofilio Stevenson consistently refused all entreaties to turn pro, famously declining one offer of US\$2m. He said: 'Professional boxing treats a fighter like a commodity, to be bought and sold and discarded when no longer of use.' Such was Stevenson's domination of the Heavy Weight competition from 1972 that it was not until he met Hungary's Istvan Levai in the semi-final at Moscow 1980 that another boxer was able to last the full three rounds with him. Even then, Levai spent nine minutes back-peddalling away from the Cuban's punch. Denied the possibility of a fourth gold medal by Cuba's boycott of the 1984 Games in Los Angeles, Stevenson won his last amateur world title in 1986, aged 34. He died in 2012 aged 60.

➔ *Cuba's Teofilio Stevenson won three Heavy Weight gold medals between 1972 and 1980, but always resisted the lure of professional boxing.*



↑ *The USA's Tyrell Biggs (left) and Yugoslavia's Salihi Aziz square off in the first-ever Super Heavy Weight competition at Los Angeles Olympics in 1984.*

## WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

The growing size and stature of the population in general has seen regular adjustments made to the weight categories in Boxing at the Games. For instance, in 1904, when Boxing was contested for the first time, the Heavy Weight division was open to anyone weighing 11 stone 4 pounds (72 kilograms) or more. By Athens 2004, a century later, boxers in the Heavy Weight division were weighing between 81 and 91 kg, with the biggest category, the Super Heavy Weights, for giants of more than 14 stone (89 kg). There has been a Super Heavy Weight category since Los Angeles 1984. The Light Heavy Weight category has remained unchanged since Helsinki 1952, for boxers weighting between 75 and 81 kg (a little more than 12½ stone).

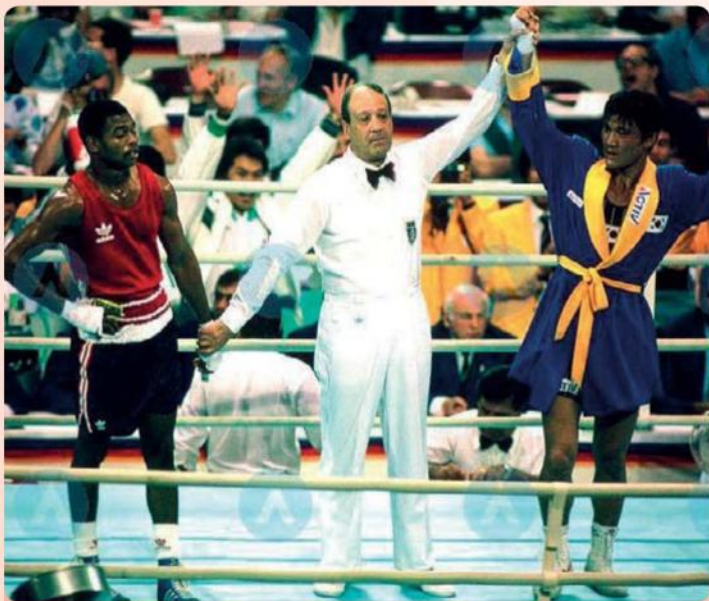
## BRITISH HAT-TRICK

The 1908 Olympic Games, the first time the event was staged in London, saw an achievement that cannot be repeated in the Games today: all three Heavy Weight boxing medallists came from Great Britain. Albert Oldman won the final with a knockout in just two minutes, beating his compatriot Sydney Evans, while Fred Parks took the bronze medal by defeating the other losing semi-finalist. In order to participate in the Games, Oldman had to take time off from his day job, as a policeman in the City of London. It is understood that after winning the title he never encountered much trouble while walking his beat. Today, however, nations are only allowed to enter one boxer in each separate weight division. Since 1952, bronze medals have been awarded to each of the losing semi-finalists.

## ALI'S MEDAL JOURNEY

The story of Muhammad Ali's Olympic Games gold medal has, in just half a century, entered into folklore, and is seen by some as symbolising how sport in general, and the Olympic Games in particular, have helped to improve race relations. Ali loved his medal. On his return to Louisville, Kentucky, in the Deep South of the United States, he kept his medal with him at all times, even sleeping with it. But what he could not do with his medal was take it with him into a whites-only restaurant in the home town that had given him a hero's welcome on his jubilant return from Rome 1960. After a confrontation with the restaurant owner and a white gang, Ali was so disgusted with his treatment that he tossed the medal into the Ohio River. Nearly 50 years later, in recognition of Ali's stance for human rights, the International Olympic Committee presented its former champion, by now badly affected with Parkinson's disease, with a replacement gold medal in a special ceremony during the 1996 Games in Atlanta.





↑ *The shock can be seen in their faces as Park Si-hun (right) is declared the winner against Roy Jones (left) in the Light Middle Weight final at Seoul 1988.*

## JONES WINS IT ALL... EXCEPT GOLD

After turning professional, Roy Jones Junior went on to enjoy a fabulous 20-year career. Regularly named as the world's best 'pound-for-pound' boxer, he won world titles at every weight division from middle to heavy weight. Before that, the 19-year-old Jones had won the Val Barker Cup, as the most stylish boxer at Seoul 1988 – even though he did not win the gold medal. Boxing at Light Middle Weight, Jones met the Republic of Korea's Si-hun Park in the final and landed 86 punches to his opponent's 32. Park even apologised for the verdict that led to a change in the scoring system. Jones put the disappointment behind him to turn professional seven months later. Within four years he had seized the first of his world titles. In Washington DC, Jones defied the pain from a broken right hand to outpoint Bernard Hopkins and secure the IBF Middle Weight crown.

## TIPPING THE SCALES

The weight limits in the Middle Weight division at the Olympic Games have been altered frequently over the past century. Since 2004, the Middle Weight division has been for boxers between 69 and 75 kilograms. The Light Middle Weight category was first contested at the 1952 Games in Helsinki, but was dropped after Sydney 2000. Since Athens 2004, the Welter Weight division has been for boxers weighing between 64 and 69kg. The Light Welter Weight division, which from 1952 until 2008 was contested by boxers weighing between 60 and 64kg, has been dropped from the programme for 2012. With three new weight divisions for women being introduced, the IOC is still maintaining a strict limit on the total number of competitors at the Games.

## STYLE STANDARD

The Middle Weight and Welter Weight boxers at the Olympic Games have consistently been seen as among the most stylish boxers in the tournament, possessing the swiftest of hands and providing the best examples of the sweet science. At every Games since 1936, a trophy named the Val Barker Cup – in honour of the first general secretary of the World Amateur Boxing Federation (AIBA) – has been awarded to a boxer chosen from the entire tournament who displays the best style and technique. The recipients of the Val Barker have usually been gold medallists in their division, and they regularly feature the winners of the Middle Weight or Welter Weight class.

**“THE VAL BARKER CUP IS AWARDED TO A BOXER FROM THE ENTIRE TOURNAMENT WHO DISPLAYS THE BEST STYLE AND TECHNIQUE”**

## SWEET SUGAR

Sugar Ray Leonard, winner of the Light Welter Weight gold medal at Montreal 1976, is one of the most renowned champions in Olympic Games Boxing history. Leonard turned professional just months after his golden moment, and went on to become the first professional boxer ever to earn more than US\$100 million in his career. Leonard's bouts with Roberto Duran, Tommy Hearns and Marvin Hagler have become the stuff of sporting legend, and helped install the American as 'The Boxer of the Decade' for the 1980s.

➔ *Sugar Ray Leonard won Light Welter Weight gold at Montreal 1976.*





## ENDURANCE TEST

Winning medals in Boxing is among the most gruelling and demanding of all the challenges offered by the Olympic Games. The competition lasts almost the entire duration of the Games and culminates in two days of finals, completed not long before the Olympic Flame is extinguished in the stadium at the Closing Ceremony. In some cases, boxers have had to get through three bouts before reaching the semi-finals, giving them sometimes less than 48 hours for recovery and the repair of any cuts or injuries sustained along the way.

## STRETCHING THE LIMIT

Amateur boxing always used to be contested over three rounds, each of three minutes. Recently, in the tournaments at the 2000, 2004 and 2008 Games, the contests lasted four rounds, each of two minutes, as the sport sought to minimise damage to boxers through exhaustion and blows to the head. Boxing experts, however, felt that the traditional format of three-minute rounds demanded more stamina from the contestants, and in London the Boxing tournament reverted to that format for men. Women continued to box over four two-minute rounds.



↑ Spain's Valentin Loren flattens referee Guorgy Sermer at the Tokyo 1964 Games - it was to be his last action in an international boxing ring.

## WRONG TARGET

Spanish Featherweight Valentin Loren has gone down in history for his infamous performance in the Boxing tournament at the 1964 Games. The referee, Hungarian Guorgy Sermer, stepped in and disqualified Loren in round two of his first-round bout for repeated holding and punching with an open glove. The Spaniard was so furious with the referee's decision that, according to some ringside observers, he landed his first punch with a proper fist on the referee's nose. Loren duly received a lifetime ban from international boxing.



↑ Scotland's Dick McTaggart picked up two medals (one gold, the other bronze) at three appearances at the Games between 1956 and 1964.

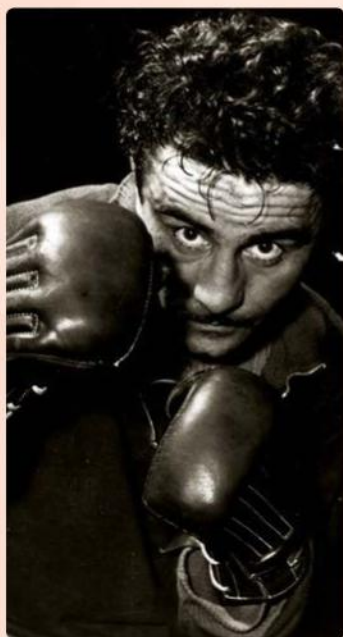
## MARVELLOUS MCTAGGART

Dick McTaggart, one of 18 children from a family in Dundee, is widely regarded as Britain's finest-ever boxer at the Olympic Games. The 21-year-old Scot won the Light Weight gold medal at Melbourne 1956, where he also received the Val Barker Cup as the tournament's most stylish boxer. McTaggart boxed again at the 1960 Games in Rome, winning the bronze medal, and at Tokyo 1964, where he was eliminated in his second bout. In both 1960 and 1964, McTaggart was beaten by Polish boxers, first Kazimierz Pazdzior and later Jerzy Kulej, who both went on to win gold medals. McTaggart's career achievements included five ABA titles, a Commonwealth Games gold medal and the European Championship, and he won 610 of his 634 bouts. He never turned professional.

## SIMPLE IN ST LOUIS

The International Olympic Committee continues to recognise St Louis 1904 as the Games at which Boxing made its debut. In the Boxing tournament staged at St Louis, many of the contests were simply one-off, straight finals. This helped Oliver Kirk to claim a unique place in history as the only boxer to win in two weight divisions at a single Games. Kirk, of the United States, beat another American, Frank Haller, for the Feather Weight title, and at Bantam Weight, he stopped George Finnegan in the third round.





↑ Hungary's Laszlo Papp won three successive gold medals between 1948 and 1956 – the first of two boxers to achieve the feat.

## PAPP PERFECTION

The Boxing tournament at Melbourne 1956 will always be remembered for the feat of the Hungarian Laszlo Papp. Having won the Middle Weight title at London 1948, Papp won the new Light Middle Weight title in 1952 and retained it at Melbourne 1956. That made him the first boxer in history to win three gold medals at the Games, a feat that was unique until Teofilio Stevenson matched it between 1972 and 1980. In his amateur career, Papp scored 55 first-round knockouts. In the 1956 Light Middle Weight final, he defeated José Torres, the Puerto Rican fighting under the flag of the United States, who would go on to become light heavy weight world champion as a professional.

## NICOLA MAKES HISTORY

Women's Boxing made its debut at London 2012 and Nicola Adams made history by winning women's Boxing's first-ever gold medal at the Olympic Games. Adams grew up in Yorkshire, but moved to Haringey, North-East London, just a few miles from the Olympic Park and ExCeL, to train in advance of London 2012. She won gold in the women's Fly Weight (51 kg) by a decisive 16–7 points margin against China's Cancan Ren. It was sweet revenge for Adams, who had been beaten by Ren in the world amateur final three months earlier. 'I can't believe I've actually done it,' said Adams, whose mile-wide smile lit up television screens around the world. 'I've been dreaming about this moment since I was 12. It's a fairytale ending.' Her interest in boxing had been sparked on seeing, 20 years earlier, a video film of Muhammad Ali's victory over George Foreman in the Rumble in the Jungle.

## ULTIMATE OSCAR WINNER

Oscar De La Hoya was one of the greatest boxers of all time, amateur or professional. As a teenager, the Los Angelino won the Light Weight gold medal at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona. A year beforehand, De La Hoya had pledged to his mother, who was dying from cancer, that he would win the Boxing gold medal. At the Games, duly inspired, De La Hoya would drop to his knees after each of his victories and point to the sky. De La Hoya won the Light Weight final by beating Marco Rudolph, the German who had beaten him in the World Championship final a year before. The triumph at the Games set up De La Hoya for a professional career in which he dominated the lighter weight divisions for the rest of the decade.

↓ Oscar De La Hoya (USA), still a teenager, celebrates winning Light Weight gold at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona.



↓ James DeGale ended Great Britain's 40-year wait for Middle Weight gold at Beijing 2008.



## DEGALE'S BREAKTHROUGH

Middle Weight British boxers have historically struggled to make their mark at the Olympic Games. James DeGale, the Middle Weight champion at Beijing 2008, was the first British boxer to win Middle Weight gold for 40 years. The last British Middle Weight champion before him was Chris Finnegan, who struck gold at the 1968 Games in Mexico City, despite being knocked down in his first bout, against Titus Simba of Tanzania. In his semi-final, Finnegan, a hod-carrier by trade, was given two standing counts of eight in his contest with Al Jones of the United States, but battled his way through to the final, where he won a majority points decision over the Soviet Union's Aleksei Kiselov.



Great Britain's Anthony Joshua (left) beat reigning Super Heavy Weight (+91kg) champion Roberto Cammarelle (right) in a thrilling London 2012 Olympic Games final.



## JOSHUA'S LONDON PRIDE

Great Britain's Anthony Joshua staged a remarkable last-round revival to take the Super Heavy Weight (+91kg) gold medal at London 2012 after poor defence had left him three points behind Italian policeman Roberto Cammarelle. A rousing climax saw Joshua land powerful shots of his own on the reigning Olympic champion and the judges gave him the victory on

countback. The Italian team appealed the decision, but ten minutes later Joshua was confirmed as the gold-medal winner. Joshua, who lost by a single point in the World Amateur Championship final at Baku in 2011, said: 'I gave it my all in the third round. My legs and everything were killing me, sometimes I wanted to stop, but my mind was working and my arms were just flying around.'

## IRISH EYES ARE SMILING

ExCeL was turned all-green as Irish fans took over the venue to cheer 26-year-old Katie Taylor to a thrilling victory in the first women's Light Weight (60kg) final at London 2012. After hugging her Russian Federation opponent Sofya Ochigava at the end of the bout, Taylor embraced her father and trainer Peter and then saluted her supporters, before draping an Irish flag around her shoulders. Taylor was without doubt one of the personalities of the London 2012 Boxing tournament. She received messages of congratulations from personalities as diverse as boxer Mike Tyson, film star Sylvester Stallone and golfer Rory McIlroy, before heading home for civic and government receptions back in Dublin.

Katie Taylor tries to land a left to the head of Sofya Ochigava during the final of the women's Light Weight (60kg). Taylor prevailed 10-8 to win Ireland's only gold medal at London 2012.



## GREAT GUNN

Amateur boxing's age rule has made it impossible for Richard Gunn, the Feather Weight champion when the Games were first held in London in 1908, to lose his record as the oldest-ever Olympic Boxing champion. Gunn was 37 in 1908. He had been British amateur champion from 1894 to 1896, but had retired because of a lack of competition and only came out of retirement for the 1908 Games. With the gold medal duly won, Gunn retired once more, this time for good, having lost one bout in 15 years.

## SAFETY FEATURES

As part of the wide-ranging safety reforms that have been made to the sport in recent years, all modern amateur boxers now wear headguards, while their large, padded gloves have white areas in the scoring area, with the aim of scoring a point with each punch they land successfully on their opponent's head or upper body. Other important safety measures in amateur boxing include an age limit: senior boxers can be no younger than 17 and no older than 34. Boxers are also banned from having beards.



# FENCING

Fencing is one of just five sports – along with Athletics, Cycling, Gymnastics and Swimming – to have been an ever-present at every modern Games since 1896. Fencing also has a unique place in Games history, because, at the first two Games of the modern era, in Athens 1896 and Paris 1900, amateurs and professionals were allowed to compete against one another. There are three forms of Fencing at the Games: *Epée*, *Foil* and *Sabre*.

## SETTING THE RULES

Fencing's international governing body was not formed until 1913 and, at the early Games, as with so many sports, the competition rules set by the International Olympic Committee and the local organisers often had a formative influence on many facets of the event. Since it was commonplace at the turn of the 20th century for fencing masters and their pupils to enter parallel competitions, it seemed almost natural to allow both to compete in the first two Games, in Athens and Paris. Contests had no time limits until the 1930s, when one match lasted seven hours. In modern fencing, the bout lasts for three rounds, each of three minutes.

## JUDGES WIRED IN

In the days before automatic electronic scoring revolutionised fencing, matches depended on the sharp eyes and quick wits of a set of expert judges. Two side judges stood behind and beside each fencer, watching for hits made by that fencer. A 'director' observed from several feet away. He would end each action by calling 'Halt!' and then poll the judges. If the judges differed, or abstained, the director could overrule. Judges began to be replaced in Fencing at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, when an electrical scoring system was used for the *Epée*, with a buzzer and lights indicating if a competitor had made a touch. The foil was scored electronically from the time of the 1956 Games in Melbourne, but the sabre, with its cut and thrust style, had to wait until the 1988 Games in Seoul before it, too, had automated scoring. As well as reducing the possibility of judges being open to any accusations of bias, the introduction of electronic scoring (and with it the possibility of more accurate scoring allowed fencers to perform subtler, lighter touches, and more touches to the back and flank than had been the case beforehand. A touch of a mere 15 milliseconds is now enough for a fencer to register a score.

## A QUESTION OF HONOUR

When the French and Italian Foil teams competed against each other at the 1924 Games in Paris, a disputed call by a judge led to an extraordinary incident: a real duel, and possibly one of the last to be fought in the 20th century. After the Games, the Italian team issued a statement that accused the Italian-born Hungarian fencing master, Italo Santelli, of supporting a competition judge's decision in favour of one of the Hungarians. When he heard of the insult, 60-year-old Santelli issued a challenge to the captain of the Italian team, Adolfo Cotronei. Government permission was required before the duel could be fought, and Santelli's son, Giorgio, stepped in for his ageing father. Using sabres, but not electronic scoring equipment, Santelli Jr was declared the winner after three minutes of duelling and his honour was duly satisfied.

## MAGICAL MAGYARS

Hungary's men went unbeaten in Team Sabre competition at the Games between 1928 and 1960 – one of the longest winning streaks in Olympic Games history. In all, the Hungarian Sabre teams won 46 matches at the Games and seven gold medals. After losing the title in 1964, Hungary did not win the Team Sabre gold medal again until 1988.



## SIX-HIT GEREVICH

Aladar Gerevich, the Individual Sabre gold medallist at London 1948 won a total of seven gold, one silver and two bronze medals in a Games career that started at Los Angeles in 1932. All but one of Gerevich's golds came in the Team Sabre competition, from 1932 through to his final Games, in Rome in 1960, when the Hungarian was 50 years old. Gerevich's six consecutive victories in the competition are an Olympic record.

◀ Hungary's Aladar Gerevich (right) registers a point against Italy's Gastone Darè in the men's Individual Sabre at London 1948. The Hungarian went on to collect both Individual and Team gold.



↓ *Elisa Di Francisca (right) defeated her Italian teammate Arianna Errigo in a dramatic women's Individual Foil final at London 2012.*



### THREE OUT OF THREE

Italy's Elisa Di Francisca beat her Italian compatriot Arianna Errigo 12–11 in overtime to win women's Individual Foil gold at London 2012. An Italian clean sweep was secured when three-times former champion Valentina Vezzali won the bronze-medal match. Luckless Errigo was 11–8 up with just 45 seconds left in the final, but Di Francisca scored three times in quick succession to equalise. In the one minute of extra time, Di Francisca had priority and launched a surprise attack followed by an immediate remise to score the winning hit. Three of the competition's last four fights went to the last hit, but the bronze-medal match was even more dramatic: world No.1 Vezzali came back from apparent defeat to beat the Republic of Korea's Hyun Hee Nam 13–12 in extra time. This was Vezzali's unprecedented fifth individual medal at her fifth Games, having won silver at Atlanta 1996 and gold at Sydney 2000, Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008.

### FORZA ITALIA!

Italy beat Japan to win the men's Team Foil gold at London 2012 and thus resisted pressure from the Republic of Korea for the status of being the world's leading Olympic Fencing nation. A 45–39 victory over Japan in the final gave the Italians their seventh medal of the Olympic Games, one more than the Koreans. The final touch came from the blade of anchor Andrea Baldini who had missed Beijing 2008. The bronze-medal match saw a decisive victory for Germany over the United States.

← *At one stage hailed as the greatest living fencer, Italy's Nedo Nadi won five of the six Fencing gold medals on offer at Antwerp 1920: in the Individual Foil and Sabre events and the Team Epée, Foil and Sabre events.*

### NADI SPANS THE WAR

In the early part of the 20th century, Nedo Nadi did much to establish Italy's precedence in the salle. As an 18-year-old in 1912, Nadi won his first Olympic gold medal in the Individual Foil in Stockholm. War then intervened, but Nadi emerged from it a stronger fencer; at Antwerp 1920, in the absence of several European teams, including the Hungarians, he not only retained his foil title but also won five of the six available gold medals, three of those with his team-mates. Nadi's deserved victory in the Individual Sabre left his brother Aldo nursing the silver medal.





## HUNGARIAN REVIVAL

Aron Szilagyi revived Hungarian Fencing honour at London 2012 by winning gold in the men's Individual Sabre after his brilliant display outclassed Italian Diego Occhiuzzi 15-8. The victory saw Szilagyi become the first Hungarian Olympic Games Individual Sabre champion in 20 years. Szilagyi led 8-1 at the first break after a series of lightning attacks to his opponent's wrist and arm, parry-ripostes and attacks on preparation. Occhiuzzi matched Szilagyi hit for hit in the second period, but that was all he could manage. The Hungarian, ranked sixth in the world, had been the highest seed to reach the semi-finals. In the bronze-medal match, the Russian Federation's Nikolay Kovalev overcame Romania's Rares Dumitrescu 15-10.







← Aron Szilagyi (right) parries a lunge from Diego Occhiuzzi in the final of the men's Individual Sabre at London 2012. He ended Hungary's 20-year wait for gold in the men's Individual Sabre.



# JUDO

Judo is a modern martial art and combat sport that was invented in 1882 by Kano Jigoro in Japan; the object is to throw, or take down, one's opponent to the ground with one of a number of possible moves. It was contested at the Games for the first time at Tokyo 1964 and (Mexico City 1968 apart) has been ever-present at the Games since then. A women's event has been running since Barcelona 1992.



↑ Anton Geesink (Netherlands) denied Japan a whitewash of Judo gold medals when he won the Open category at Tokyo 1964.

## GEESINK PUTS AN END TO JAPAN'S MONOPOLY

In 1961, for the first time since the event started in 1956, the Dutchman Anton Geesink became the first judo fighter to defeat a Japanese fighter at the World Championships, winning the open (unlimited weight) category. Three years later, when Tokyo staged the Olympic Games, the Japanese won three weight divisions and were desperate to add a fourth in the Open category. In the final, Geesink, 1.98 metres tall and weighing more than 120 kilograms, towered over Akio Kaminaga, only 1.70m although weighing 102kg. Geesink, who had defeated Kaminaga in the preliminaries, managed to hold down the Japanese fighter to take gold. It was a pivotal moment in the sport: the landscape of international judo had changed forever.

## SADNESS TO HAPPINESS

Spain's Miriam Blasco was the favourite to win the -57kg class at Barcelona 1992. She was the 1991 world and European champion, but a few weeks before the Games, her coach, Sergio Cardell, was killed in a car crash. She wore his black belt for the final against Great Britain's Nicola Fairbrother. It was a very close contest, with Blasco securing victory and the gold medal, but the rivals became close friends, later entering into business together running a judo centre in Spain.

## GOLD ON ONE LEG

Built, as one opponent remarked, 'like a refrigerator with a head on top', Yasuhiro Yamashita was the outstanding heavyweight in the world from 1977 until his retirement in 1985, being unbeaten in 203 consecutive bouts, including four world titles. However, Japan boycotted the 1980 Games in Moscow and he had to wait four years, until 1984, for the supreme title, the Olympic Games gold medal. Yamashita was expected to cruise to victory in Los Angeles, but he tore a right calf muscle early on and had to limp for the rest of the tournament. In the final, Egyptian Mohammed Ali Rashwan lasted barely a minute before being held down. A fully fit Yamashita would have made the contest even shorter.



↑ Italian-born Angelo Parisi won a bronze medal for Great Britain at Munich 1972 and gold for France at Moscow 1980.

## PARISI WINS FOR EUROPE

Born in the Frosinone province in central Italy, Angelo Parisi was brought up in London and had to have a change of nationality rushed through government departments in 1970 so he could represent Britain at the European Junior Championships, which he won. After taking a bronze medal at the 1972 Games in Munich, he married a French girl and switched nationalities again. Parisi's fluent throwing style could uproot the most stubborn of opponents and he won the Heavyweight title for France at the 1980 Games in Moscow, as well as getting a silver medal in the Open classes in 1980 and 1984.



## ADAMS FELLED AT THE LAST

Neil Adams – coached at the same London club, the Budokwai, as Angelo Parisi – was possibly the finest-ever stylist to hail from outside Japan. Although a four-time European champion and the 1981 world champion, he only managed to collect two silver medals at the Olympic Games, losing in the Moscow 1980 -71 kg final to Ezio Gamba and the Los Angeles 1984 -78kg final to Frank Wieneke of West Germany. In the latter, Wieneke cleverly made a half-hearted attack and, as Adams pulled his shoulder back, the Briton left himself open to a superb left seionage (shoulder throw) and was hurled to the mat.

## NO SHORT CUT

At the 2000 Games in Sydney, Debbie Allan was among the favourites to win the Featherweight title. On the morning of the event, the Briton weighed in under the 52-kilogram limit on the practice scales, but it was discovered that paper had been inserted in the mechanism. After the scales were recalibrated, she was found to be overweight. In a desperate attempt to make the weight before the time limit expired, she began vigorously exercising, stripped naked and even had her hair cut off. But she was still 50 grams overweight and was barred from competition.

## A REAL-LIFE COMIC-BOOK HERO

No female Japanese judo fighter has ever inspired as much fascination in her country as Ryoko Tani, whose resemblance to the comic-book character 'Yawara-chan' made her a celebrity. A bronze medallist at the age of 16 in 1992, she was favourite for the -48kg in 1996, having been unbeaten for four years, but she lost to a wild-card entry from the People's Republic of Korea, Sun-hui Kye, in the biggest upset in the history of the sport. Four years later, in Sydney, with Japanese cameramen surrounding the mat, she took the coveted title at last – and went on to retain it at Athens 2004.

↓ *Japan's Ryoko Tani won the women's -48kg events at Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004.*



↑ *Gemma Gibbons was one of the bravest British medallists, her silver in the women's Half-Heavyweight (70-78kg) class came with a broken thumb.*

## GIBBONS BEATS THE PAIN

Gemma Gibbons became Great Britain's first Olympic Judo medallist for 12 years when she took a surprise silver in defeat to American Kayla Harrison in the women's Half-Heavyweight (70-78kg) final at London 2012. Gibbons's coach, Kate Howey, had been Britain's last women's Judo medallist, securing silver at Sydney 2000. Earlier, Gibbons, ranked a lowly No.42 in the world, had touched the hearts of the nation by mouthing: 'I love you Mum,' after a victory move in the semi-final. Jeannette Gibbons, Gemma's mother, had encouraged and supported her daughter's career before dying of leukaemia when Gemma was 17. Early in the competition, Gibbons suffered a broken thumb, but the medical team, assessing that it could not be damaged further, allowed her to fight on – and told her about the fracture only after she had won her medal.



# TAEKWONDO

A relative newcomer to the Games programme, Taekwondo appeared twice as a demonstration sport (at Seoul 1988 and Barcelona 1992) before becoming a full-medal sport at Sydney 2000. The Republic of Korea has been the dominant force in the event, winning ten of the 32 gold medals contested. Men and women each compete in four categories: -58kg, -68kg, -80kg and +80kg; and -49kg, -57kg, -67kg and +67kg, respectively.



↑ Iran's Hadi Saei Bonehkohal launches an all-out attack on Chinese Taipei's Chih Hsiung Huang on his way to gold in the Lightweight final at Athens 2004.

## IRANIAN AUCTION

Iranian Hadi Saei Bonehkohal, a triple world champion, was one of the favourites for the Featherweight (under 68kg) title in Sydney, but he lost to the Republic of Korea's Joon-Sik Sin in the semi-final. Three years later, an earthquake flattened his hometown of Bam, and the competitor, a former national sportsman of the year in Iran, auctioned his medal collection to help the victims. He was, therefore, without any trophies when he arrived in Athens for the 2004 Games – but he soon had the best trophy of all. In the final, he defeated Huang Chih Hsiung of Chinese Taipei to take the gold medal.

## CONTROVERSIAL START FOR STEVE

Steve Lopez was the first person to win a Taekwondo title at the Olympic Games. This was at Sydney 2000 in the Featherweight division, when Lopez met the Republic of Korea's Joon-Sik Sin. The Korean was ahead until Lopez scored with a back kick. At the scheduled end of the bout, the referee awarded the bout to the American stating the Korean had been penalised for two half-points during the contest. In fact, the rules stated that the bout should have continued until one fighter had scored. The referee was suspended for a year, but Lopez kept what proved merely to be the first of two Olympic and five world titles. His world title success in 2005 was notable because both his brother Mark and sister Diana also collected gold medals at the same championships in Madrid.

## VIETNAMESE JOIN IN

Vietnam finally joined the long list of countries to have won Olympic Games medals when Tran Hieu Ngan took silver in Taekwondo at Sydney 2000. Two years earlier, Ngan had taken a bronze medal in the Southeast Asian Games and a gold medal in the Asian Championships, but it was her performance in Sydney made her a national celebrity. The 26-year-old Ngan, whose father, the owner of a confectionery shop, had died a week before the Games opened, lost 2-0 in the Featherweight (Under 57kg) final to Jung Jae-Eun, the reigning world champion.

## CHAMPION CHU

Mu-Yen Chu won the gold medal in the Flyweight (under 58kg) category at Athens 2004, Chinese Taipei's first-ever gold in the Olympic Games. He arrived at Athens 2004 as both the world champion, having claimed that title at Garmisch-Partenkirchen in 2003, and the world student champion. A student at the University of Pittsburgh in the United States, he earned an MSc, masters degree, in Occupational Therapy in December 2008, four months after claiming bronze at the Beijing Games in 2008. Chu's girlfriend, Shun-chun Yan, lost in the semi-final of the under-49kg category to gold medallist Jingyu Wu of China and then in the bronze-medal match to Daynellis Montejo of Cuba.

## BRONZE FOR AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan won their first-ever Olympic medal when Rohullah Nikpai took bronze in the men's 58kg event at Beijing 2008. Nikpai beat world champion flyweight Juan Antonio Ramos of Spain in the repechage. Afghanistan president Hamid Karzai immediately called to congratulate Nikpai and gave him a house at the government's expense.



## FIRST FOR TAIWANESE

Chen Shih-Hsien became a celebrity in Chinese Taipei when she beat Cuba's Yanelis Labrada to win the Flyweight (under 49kg) gold medal in Athens in 2004. In doing so, she became the first competitor in any sport from her country to win an Olympic Games title, although she was followed a few minutes later by her compatriot Chu Mu-Yen, also in Taekwondo. At the Victory Ceremony, the Chinese Taipei Olympic Flag was flown, rather than the country's national flag, because of an original ruling by the International Olympic Committee at the behest of the Chinese government. She said afterwards: 'I am a single girl who has wandered around for ten years. My parents now want me to settle down.'

➔ *Shih-Hsien Chen (right) of the Chinese Taipei made history when she won the women's Flyweight Taekwondo event at Athens 2004.*



## JONES' SWEET REVENGE

Jade Jones claimed Great Britain's first Olympic Games Taekwondo gold medal when she beat Yuzhuo Hou of China 6-4 in the women's under-57kg competition at London 2012. It was sweet revenge for the 19-year-old, who had been beaten by the Chinese fighter, in sudden-death, at the 2011 World Championships. Thrilled, Jones – from Bodelwyddan, near Prestatyn in North Wales, said afterwards: 'I sang the national anthem and it was the best moment of my whole life. Amazing. I've seen this medal on pictures and seen other people get them. To finally have one round my own neck, I still don't believe it. It's just crazy.' Britain's previous best result had been the bronze medal Sarah Stevenson had won at Beijing 2008.

↓ *Jade Jones (right) avenged her loss in the World Championships to Yuzhuo Hou by beating her at London 2012.*



## EVEN BETTER FOR TAZEGUL

Turkey's Servet Tazegul won Taekwondo gold by defeating Iran's Mohammad Baghrei Motamed 6-5 in the men's under-68kg competition at London 2012 to underline his status as the world No.1 and improve on the bronze medal he won at Beijing 2008. Top seed Tazegul, who defeated Britain's Martin Stamper to reach the final, dedicated the gold medal – Turkey's first of the Games – to his mother, who had died in June. Stamper missed out on a medal after losing 6-5 to Rohullah Nikpah of Afghanistan. Nikpah had won his country's first-ever Olympic Games medal with a bronze at Beijing 2008.



# FREESTYLE WRESTLING

Freestyle Wrestling, which unlike Greco-Roman Wrestling allows the use of legs in both offence and defence, has been contested at every Games since St Louis 1904 by men and since Athens 2004 by women. The United States have been the sport's most successful country, winning 112 medals, 48 of them gold.

## HAT-TRICK HEROINES

Japan's women took three of the four Freestyle Wrestling gold medals at London 2012, with extra-special celebrations being set off by Saori Yoshida (63kg) and Kaori Icho (72kg). Both women won their third consecutive golds, with Yoshida lifting her total of Olympic and world titles to 12, matching the legendary Aleksandr Karelin. Yoshida and Icho both said it was too soon to say if they would attempt to defend their titles at Rio 2016. There was a chance they may have seen changes in the competition if they did, as the sport's governing body lobbied for the number of women's Freestyle Wrestling weight classes to be raised from three to six, but the competition format in Rio will be the same as in 2012.

## BANGING THE GONG

British heavyweight Ken Richmond got a bronze medal at the 1952 Games in Helsinki and finished fourth equal in Melbourne four years later. Richmond, who was also picked, although never fought, for Great Britain in Judo, was desperately unlucky in Helsinki, losing on a split decision to the Georgian Arsen Mekokishvili, the eventual gold medallist. Yet Richmond's face and physique would become better known than those of any of his contemporaries: he was the man who was seen banging the gong at the start of the J. Arthur Rank films.

↓ *A bronze medallist at Helsinki 1952, Great Britain's Ken Richmond achieved greater fame on the silver screen.*



↑ *Nigeria-born Daniel Igali won Freestyle Wrestling gold for Canada in the 69kg category at Sydney 2000.*

## THE FAMILY MAN

Daniel Igali was the captain of Nigeria's Wrestling team. After competing at the 1994 Commonwealth Games at Victoria, Canada, he stayed in the country, and was accepted as a refugee because of the political unrest in Nigeria at the time. Igali continued to wrestle and was supported in his career by his 'surrogate' mother, Maureen Matheny, even though she was battling cancer. At the 1999 World Championships, he won gold and was able to show her the medal before she died. A year later, Igali won gold again at Sydney 2000.

## ULTIMATE AMERICAN WINNER

Dan Gable was not only one of history's outstanding freestyle wrestlers, but was also a stunningly successful coach. The Iowa-born-and-raised American lost only six of 308 bouts in a career that climaxed with his victory in the Lightweight division at the 1972 Games in Munich, despite a ravaged left knee and a deep cut over his left eye. Gable's ferocious training routine included taking a pack of cards, turning each one over and doing the number of press-ups equivalent to the figures on the card – he would see how often he could go through the pack. Gable then moved into coaching, leading Iowa University to 15 victories in the National Collegiate Championships. In 1984, he coached the US Olympic team to seven gold and two silver medals in Los Angeles.

## MCNAMARA STUNS THE HOSTS

In 1964, the Japanese were confident that they would dominate both Judo and Wrestling when Tokyo hosted the Olympic Games. Dutchman Anton Geesink ended their hopes of a clean sweep in Judo and, in Wrestling, Denis McNamara, a 38-year-old London policeman, pinned Japanese heavyweight Masanori Saito after 1:23.00, silencing a huge crowd that included Emperor Hirohito. Saito had to cut off his pigtail in penance for bringing disgrace on his country. McNamara did not win a medal, finishing fifth overall.



## THE GREATEST PIN?

When Werner Dietrich, the 120-kilogram super-heavyweight German competed at Munich 1972, he wanted to be the first wrestler to win medals in five successive Games, having won a record total of five competing in both Freestyle and Greco-Roman. His first bout was against Chris Taylor, who weighed a mighty 195kg. After 13 seconds, Dietrich produced a suplex, bending backwards as the American lent on his chest and then turning the airborne Taylor on to his back for a pin – an extraordinary feat. However, Dietrich's Games ended with him finishing fifth.

## MEDVED THE MAGNIFICENT

Between 1962 and 1972, Ukraine's Alexander Medved missed out on the Olympic Games or world title only once, when he drew a bout with Turkey's Ahmet Ayik in the 1965 World Championships and forfeited the gold medal through having more bad marks. Otherwise he was supreme, moving up from Light Heavyweight to Heavyweight and finally to Super Heavyweight, and winning three consecutive gold medals. He was described by British contemporary Ron Grinstead as 'the Muhammad Ali of the sport – like Ali he has terrific strength, but is very skilful as well'. His final triumph in the Super Heavyweights, weighing only 108 kilograms and outweighed by most of his rivals, came at Munich 1972. He announced his retirement by kissing the mat.

## GOLDEN BROTHERS

The United States' Dave Schultz won Welterweight gold at the Los Angeles Games in 1984 while brother Mark took the Middleweight title. Displaying immense ability, Dave overwhelmed the opposition, and although most Communist countries were not present, he was the 1983 world champion and probably would have triumphed regardless. He retired three years later, but in 1993, inspired by the prospect of competing at Atlanta 1996, started wrestling once again. Sadly, however, the man who was top-ranked American at the time, was shot dead in January 1996 by squad sponsor John Du Pont.

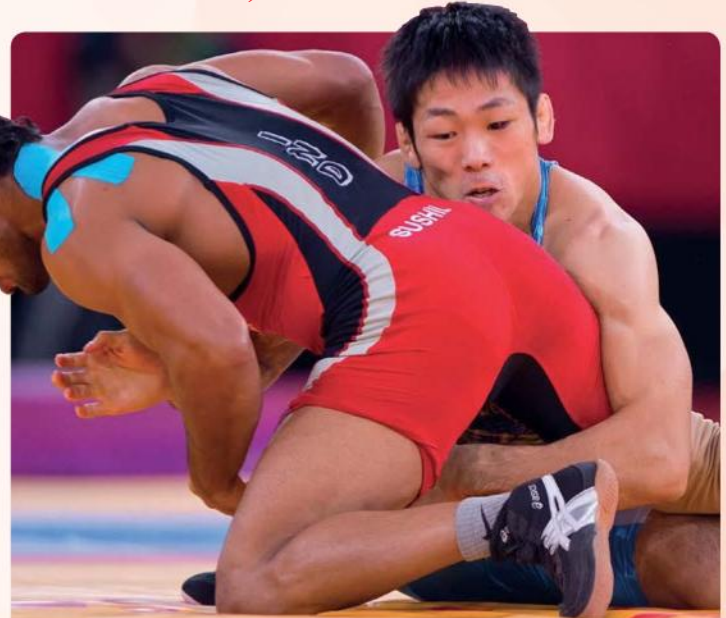
## MAKING AMENDS

When women's Freestyle Wrestling was introduced to the Games' programme in 2004, the Japanese, with their background in Judo, were expected to win most of the titles. Initially, it didn't seem as though that would be the case. Heavyweight Kyoko Hamaguchi was controversially beaten in a preliminary bout before bouncing back to take bronze and, in the Flyweights, Chiharu Icho picked up a silver. However, 30 minutes later, Chiharu's younger sister, Kaori, won Middleweight gold, Saori Yoshida won the Lightweights, and Japan ended up capturing half the titles.

## UNBEATEN CHAMPION

No other international wrestler has had a record as perfect as that enjoyed by Osamu Watanabe who, in a brief but glorious career, won the featherweight title at the 1962 and 1963 World Championships, finished first in the 1962 Asian Games and then competed at the 1964 Games in Tokyo amid huge expectation. The 24-year-old from Hokkaido, the island renowned for producing fighters, captured gold without conceding a point. He had won 186 consecutive bouts and retired after the Games.

**“DAVE SCHULTZ, THE MAN WHO WAS TOP-RANKED AMERICAN WRESTLER AT THE TIME, WAS SHOT DEAD IN JANUARY 1996 BY SQUAD SPONSOR JOHN DU PONT”**



↑ Tatsuhiro Yonemitsu (right) grabs the leg of Sushil Kumar during the men's 74kg Freestyle Wrestling final at London 2012. The Indian silver medallist was battling a stomach complaint.

## JOY FOR JAPANESE

At London 2012, Japan's Tatsuhiro Yonemitsu won his country's first men's Olympic Games Wrestling gold medal since Mitsuru Sato had struck gold at Seoul 1988. He recorded a 3–1 win over India's Sushil Kumar in the final of the 74kg category. Yonemitsu was always in control against the railway worker from Delhi, who had hoped to become India's first-ever Olympic Wrestling champion. The Japanese wrestler was 1–0 up after a tight first period, but pulled clear in the second. Kumar, however, blamed a stomach virus for upsetting his gold-medal pursuit. Livan Lopez of Cuba and Kazakhstan's Akzhurek Tanatarov took the bronze medals. This was Japan's fourth Freestyle Wrestling gold of the London 2012 Games – their best medal tally in the event since 1968.



# GRECO-ROMAN WRESTLING

Greco-Roman Wrestling, despite its name, has its origins in 19th century France. It was contested at the inaugural Modern Games in 1896 and has been a constant presence at the Olympic Games (as a men-only sport) since London 1908. Unlike Freestyle Wrestling, competitors cannot make any holds below the waist.

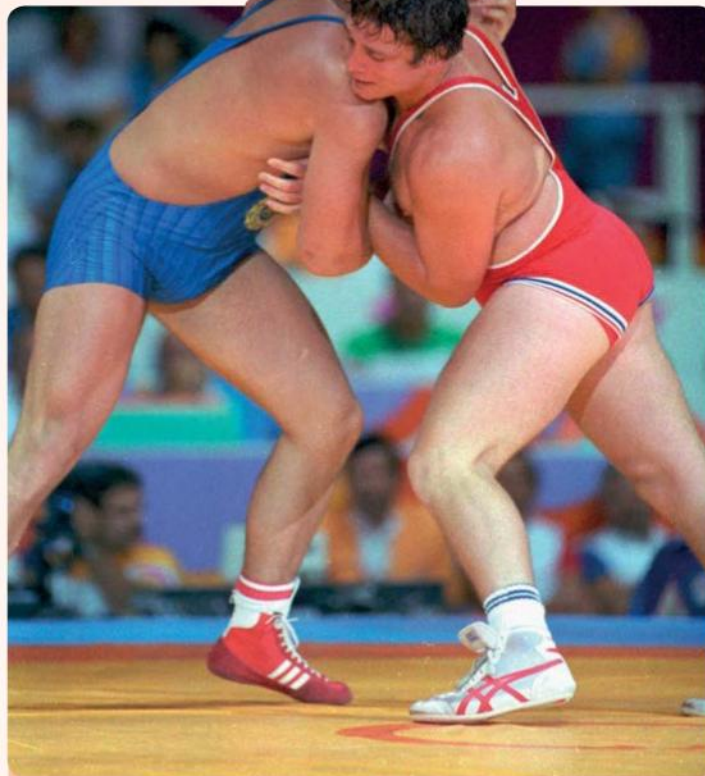
## POLE WITH AN EYE FOR THE LADIES

Poland's Kazimierz Lipiern had a series of ferocious Featherweight battles with Ukraine's Nelson Davydyan during the 1970s and, after losing to him in the 1975 World Championships, gained revenge by taking the gold medal in Montreal ahead of Davydyan the following year. Afterwards, Lipiern advised wrestlers not to drink alcohol or smoke. To this the Hungarian bronze medallist Lazlo Reczi added: 'And no women.' Lipiern responded: 'That is taking sacrifices too far. Women are good to wrestle with too.'

## ALL FOR NOTHING

There must be huge sympathy for the winner of the longest Wrestling bout in Olympic Games history. Estonia's Martin Klein fought Finland's Alfred Asikainen for 11 hours in the fierce sun of the outdoor arena in the Middleweight semi-final at Stockholm 1912. Klein was actually representing Russia, because Estonia was then part of the Czarist Empire, as was Finland, his opponent's country. Although there were regular breaks, the continuous struggle placed an enormous strain on both competitors. Eventually, Klein pinned Asikainen to end the bout and earn himself a place in the final against Sweden's Claes Johanson. However, Klein was too exhausted to fight another bout, so the Swede was declared the winner.

↓ *Russia's Martin Klein (left) and Finland's Alfred Asikainen in their epic 11-hour battle in the Middleweight semi-final at Stockholm 1912.*



↑ *Jeff Blatnick battled his way to a memorable and popular victory in the Super Heavyweight category at Los Angeles 1984.*

## A BROTHER'S INSPIRATION

Few gold-medal winners were more emotional at the 1984 Games in Los Angeles than Jeff Blatnick, a 110-kilogram American. In 1977, he had lost his brother Dave in a motorcycle accident and, in 1982, Jeff himself was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma, a form of cancer. He had his spleen and appendix removed and underwent radiation therapy – three weeks later, he was wrestling again. In the Super Heavyweight final, he defeated Sweden's Thomas Johansson. After his victory, watched by his parents, Blatnick sank to his knees, made the sign of a cross and told reporters: 'Thinking about Dave helped me keep my mind in perspective.'

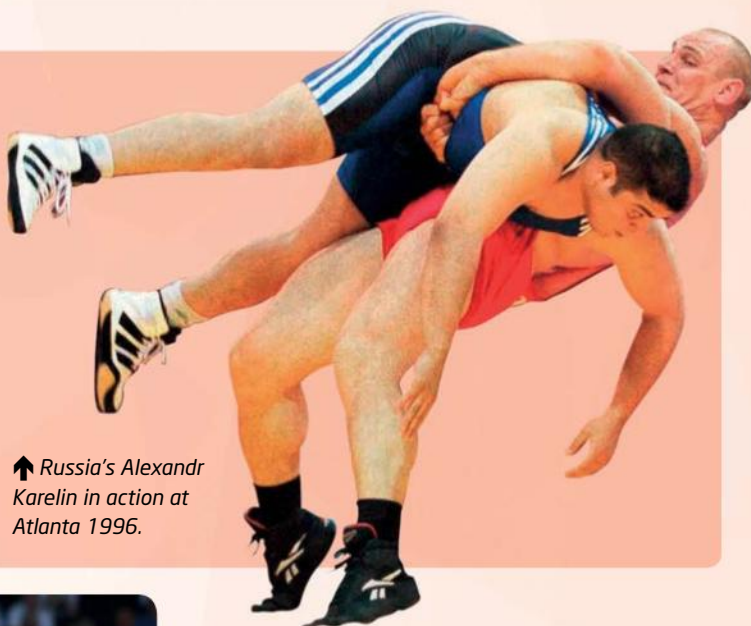
## THE ROLLING SWEDE

Carl 'Calle' Westergren is a unique figure in Greco-Roman Wrestling at the Games. The Swede won three gold medals between 1920 and 1932, all at different weights, this despite losing to Finland's Onni Penninen in the first round in 1928. He won his first gold medal, at the age of 24, at Middleweight in 1920, leaving Artur Lindfors of Finland with the silver medal. He moved up to Light Heavyweight four years later, where he beat compatriot Rudolf Svensson. Finally, he moved up to Heavyweight for his last gold medal in Los Angeles, defeating Josef Urban of Czechoslovakia. Westergren once recalled that when he stood on the edge of the mat, he used to put his thumbs inside his suit and say to himself: 'Considering how strong I feel today, no one can beat me.' His speciality move was the 'Westergren Roll', with which he used to tip opponents over.



## KARELIN – THE FRIDGE MAGNET

Russian Aleksandr Karelin is the greatest Greco-Roman wrestler in history. He won three successive Super Heavyweight titles and was unbeaten in international competition for 13 years until, at Sydney 2000, while still recovering from an injury, he was beaten in the final by American Rulon Gardner. At Atlanta 1996, when he won his third title at the Games, he was called 'the bouncer in the meanest bar in Hell'. At 1.93 metres tall and weighing 125 kilograms, he was so robust that once, when the lift broke down at his block of flats in Siberia, he carried a fridge up eight flights of stairs. An exponent of the reverse body lift, he locked hands under an opponent's prone body, lifted him to waist height and hurled him to the mat.



↑ Russia's Aleksandr Karelin in action at Atlanta 1996.



↑ Mijain Lopez (red) of Cuba attempts to drive Heiki Nabi of Estonia onto the mat during their men's 120kg Greco-Roman Wrestling final at London 2012. The Cuban took the decision on points, winning 3-0.

## LOPEZ OUT ON HIS OWN

At London 2012, Cuba's Mijain Lopez successfully defended the men's 120kg Greco-Roman Wrestling title that he had won at Beijing 2008, and he was the only man to retain his crown. Lopez, the 29-year-old, four-time world champion, was his country's flag-bearer at both Games and the event favourite. He duly overpowered Turkey's Riza Kayaalp in the semi-finals and then Estonia's Heiki Nabi 3-0 on points in the gold-medal match. The Islamic Republic of Iran topped the Greco-Roman Wrestling medal table with three golds, their best return since they first competed in the sport at London 1948. Cuba and the Republic of Korea each claimed one gold, while the Russian Federation won two.

**"IN THE DECISIVE BOUT WITH DENNIS HALL, MELNICHENKO SCORED THREE POINTS FOR A LIFT AND THROW JUST 90 SECONDS IN"**

## POWER IN THE LAND

World champion Roman Vlasov of the Russian Federation displayed a level of style and skill that belied his 21 years as he won the 84kg Greco-Roman Wrestling gold medal by beating Armenia's Arsen Julfalakyan in the final. Arsen almost emulated his father, Levon, who won gold (representing the Soviet Union) in the 68kg division at Seoul 1988. Vlasov had beaten the long-time world No.1 Selcuk Cebi in his rival's home town of Istanbul to win the 2011 World Championship and had followed it up in early 2012 with European title success. Cebi lost to Sweden's Robert Rosengren in the last 16. A significant height advantage helped Vlasov secure command of the final and win the gold medal. The two bronzes in the 84kg division were awarded to Aleksandr Kazakevic of Lithuania and Emin Ahmadov of Azerbaijan.

## THE POWER OF FAITH

When Yury Melnichenko, a Jew living in the Ukraine, visited Jerusalem in 1991, he placed a paper in the 'Wailing Wall' stating that his ambition was to become an Olympic champion. Five years later, having transferred his allegiance to Kazakhstan because of the superior training environment there, he stormed through the early rounds of the Bantamweight division in Atlanta. Then, in the decisive bout with American Dennis Hall, who had upset him in the World Championships in Prague in 1995, Melnichenko scored three points for a lift and throw just 90 seconds into the contest, quickly stretched his lead to four points and then hung on to win a memorable gold medal.



# MULTI-EVENT SPORTS

Triathlon and Modern Pentathlon are two of the most demanding Olympic events, combining a number of disciplines

London

➔ Alistair Brownlee is already draped in a Union Flag as he approaches the finish line at the end of the London 2012 Triathlon with victory assured. His brother Jonathan joined him on the podium after winning bronze.







# MODERN PENTATHLON

Invented by Baron Pierre du Coubertin, the father of the Modern Games, Modern Pentathlon – as opposed to the Ancient Games' original version of the pentathlon – has been contested at every Games since Stockholm 1912 (and by women since Sydney 2000). Athletes contest individual contests in fencing, swimming, and riding, as well as the combined event (shooting and running).

## MAN WITH ALL THE ANSWERS

Sweden's Bjorn Ferm kept himself occupied during breaks in the long and exhausting fencing section of the Modern Pentathlon competition at Mexico City 1968 by reading a detective novel. Ferm, an economics student from Jönköping, eventually completed the cross-country course four seconds inside the target time to take the gold medal.

## SEVEN-UP SOVIET

Pavel Lednev, with seven medals in a career spanning four Games between Mexico City 1968 and Moscow 1980, can stake a claim as the most successful competitor in Modern Pentathlon, even though he never won the Individual title. Lednev was a member of the gold medal-winning Soviet Union team in both 1972 and 1980, but, despite winning four Individual medals, his best performance in Individual competition came at the 1976 Games in Montreal, when he finished in the silver-medal position.

## GRUT THE GREAT

The 1948 champion was Swedish army captain Willie Grut, who won the riding, fencing and shooting disciplines. At the 1948 Winter Games in St Moritz, Grut was second in a demonstration Winter Pentathlon event, comprising alpine and cross-country skiing, shooting, fencing and equestrian sport. Not surprisingly, he was voted Sweden's sportsman of the year.



↑ Sweden's Lars Hall, a carpenter from Gothenburg, became the Modern Pentathlon's first non-military winner at Helsinki 1952.



↑ Second World War hero George S. Patton finished fifth in the Modern Pentathlon at Stockholm 1912.

## PATTON TOO ACCURATE

The American pentathlete who finished fifth in the first competition at Stockholm 1912 was none other than George S. Patton junior. As General Patton, he commanded the 7th Army during the Second World War invasion of Sicily, and later led the 3rd Army across France after the Normandy landings. Patton, a graduate of the West Point military academy, was a lieutenant at the time of his participation at the Games. Shooting, strangely, proved to be his weakest discipline. Patton always maintained he would have won gold had one of his shots not been ruled a miss. He insisted his shot had gone through an existing hole in the target.

## HALL'S UNIQUE DOUBLE

Swedish athletes enjoyed huge success in the Modern Pentathlon's early years. The competition was dominated by members of the military, and every gold medal from 1912 to 1956 was won by a Swedish competitor. The 1952 winner, Lars Hall, a carpenter from Gothenburg, was the first non-military winner. He enjoyed a stroke of good fortune on the way. He arrived late for the shooting phase, but was allowed to take part because a protest had delayed the competition. Hall was back in action at Melbourne 1956, when he won the gold medal once more. He is the only man to have won the event twice.



## MURRAY ENDS IT ON A SILVER

The Modern Pentathlon's Samantha Murray says the passionate home crowd 'spurred me on' as she claimed a silver medal in the final strides of what was the very last event of London 2012. The 22-year-old was fourth at the start of the concluding run-shoot segment, the last part of the competition. Inconsistent initial shooting saw her slip to seventh at the end of the first of the three laps in the 3,000m cross-country course, but she ran bravely until she had only Lithuania's Laura Asadauskaite and Brazil's Yane Marques in her sights. Murray overtook Marques coming out of the last shooting stop and the crowd, as she acknowledged, fired her on to silver. Remarkably, she had taken up the sport only four years earlier.

➔ *Samantha Murray turns to run away from the shooting section of the final segment in the Modern Pentathlon at London 2012. Her accuracy in the last shooting stop helped her win silver.*



## SVOBODA STANDS UP FOR SPORT

London 2012 was a pressure point for Modern Pentathlon, not only among the competitors, but also for a sport that is seeking to maintain its presence on the Olympic programme. David Svoboda of the Czech Republic did his best on behalf of the sport. He beat China's Zhongrong Cao to the gold medal after a highly dramatic conclusion. Svoboda had claimed an early lead in the fencing, but slipped behind Cao after the swimming, regained the advantage in the riding stage, before finishing six seconds clear following the combine event finale. The army officer thus claimed an Olympic record of 5,928 points. Hungarian Adam Marosi took bronze.

## MAGNIFICENT MAGYARS

A Team event was held in Modern Pentathlon from 1952 until 1992. This competition was run concurrently with the Individual event and the winners were calculated by adding the combined scores of three participating pentathletes from each nation. Hungary were the first Team champions and won the competition on four separate occasions. The Soviet Union also won four gold medals. Despite numerous objections, each victorious team was given only one medal to be shared between the three members.

## ARRESTING PRACTICE

At the 1932 Games in Los Angeles, Sweden's Johan Oxenstierna decided to fire some practice shots in some nearby woods just before the pistol shooting discipline began. It was not a wise decision, as a suspicious local police officer raced over and threatened to arrest him. After much persuasion, the policeman eventually realised the Swede was a genuine competitor, and the officer stayed to watch the shooting competition. Despite the earlier alarm, Oxenstierna went on to take the gold medal.

## ONISHENKO OUT

At Montreal 1976, Soviet competitor Boris Onishenko was disqualified in the biggest scandal to hit the sport. Before the fencing phase of the competition, he had tampered with the handle of his épée so that it could register a hit when no contact had been made. This was discovered after he had recorded a hit during his bout with Great Britain's Jim Fox. Onishenko, a silver medalist at the 1972 Games, was thrown out of the competition. That opened the way for Poland's Janusz Peciak to take gold in the Individual event. It also put the Soviet team out of the running for the Team event, in which Great Britain took gold.

## COURTING TROUBLE

American pentathlete Orben Greenwald, a World Championship team silver medallist in 1975, faced a court martial for insubordination shortly before the 1976 Games in Montreal. Incredibly, the charge was brought by his team manager, one Colonel Donald Johnson. Although the matter was eventually dropped, Greenwald was not allowed to compete.

## DOCTOR KNOWS BEST

Great Britain's Stephanie Cook put her career as a doctor on hold to prepare for the inaugural women's Modern Pentathlon at Sydney 2000. This was held on the last day of the Games and Cook, an outstanding runner, made up 49 seconds on American Emily de Riel – a former team-mate at Oxford University – to win gold.

## DOUBLE GOLD

Hungary's gold medal-winning team at Rome 1960 featured two individual champions. Ferenc Nemeth won his prize at the same Games, but Andras Balczó had to wait a further 12 years for his personal moment of glory. He finally became Individual champion at the 1972 Games in Munich, aged 34.



# TRIATHLON

Although World Championships in the sport have been staged in every year since 1989, Triathlon had to wait until Sydney 2000 before it finally made its first appearance at the Olympic Games. The three events that compose a Triathlon are contested back-to-back over internationally recognised distances – a 1.5km swim, followed by a 40km cycle and then a 10km run to the finish line.

## THREE IN ONE...

Although the sport was not invented until the 1970s, all three elements were performed simultaneously during the 1908 Games in London. This was possible because the White City Stadium, at which the Games were held, featured not only a running track (536 metres in length) but also a 600m cycle track and a 50m swimming pool. On certain days, events in all three sports were scheduled at the same time.

## GOLD HAWAII

Switzerland's Brigitte McMahon was the first triathlete to win an Olympic Games gold medal. Initially a Swiss swimming champion, she was bitten by the Triathlon bug while working in Hawaii as a teaching assistant at the university. At Sydney 2000, she left it late to make her surge to gold and her final victory margin was only two seconds ahead of home favourite and long-time race leader Michellie Jones of Australia.

## PARISIAN APPROVAL

The decision to introduce Triathlon as a full-medal sport at the Games was taken in Paris at the 103rd session of the International Olympic Committee held in 1994. The International Triathlon Union itself had only been formed five years before.

## SWITCH IN TIME

New Zealand's Hamish Carter was a rower at school who switched to triathlon when he realised he would never be tall enough to row at senior level. His main rival at Athens 2004 was compatriot and sometime training partner Bevan Docherty, then reigning world champion. Carter was only 33rd after the swim, but had an excellent cycle ride and dismounted to find himself among a small leading group with Docherty. With 1km to go, the Kiwis were out on their own, before Carter raced clear to win by seven seconds.

## TAKING TO THE WATER

The inaugural women's Triathlon at the Games was one of the first medals to be decided on the opening day of competition at Sydney 2000. Competition began with a swim in Sydney Harbour and the event helped introduce the landmarks of the Host City to millions of television viewers worldwide. The Sydney police estimated that nearly 500,000 spectators lined the streets to watch the cycling and running in the women's event on one day and the men the next.

↓ *The 2000 Games got off to a spectacular start when the women's Triathlon got under way in Sydney Harbour.*



**“WHITFIELD PICKED HIS WAY THROUGH THE FIELD IN THE RUN TO CLAIM GOLD”**

## LUCKY 13 FOR WHITFIELD

Canada's Simon Whitfield was ranked only 13th in the world at the time of his men's Triathlon triumph at Sydney 2000. He had decamped to Australia for three years to train during the Canadian winter and actually held joint citizenship in both countries. He was in 28th place after the swim and cycle ride, but picked his way through the field in the run and overtook the eventual silver medallist Stefan Vuckovic of Germany less than 100 metres from the finish. His victory helped him fulfil a childhood ambition that he had since he competed in his first triathlon aged 12. He had decided he wanted to do something that would merit inclusion in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Whitfield also won men's Triathlon silver at Beijing 2008.

← *Canada's Simon Whitfield put a crash in the cycle ride behind him to win men's Triathlon gold at Sydney 2000.*





## MARRIED BLISS

Katherine Allen, winner of the 2004 women's Triathlon, hailed from Geelong in Australia. On a backpacking holiday in Europe, she visited Austria, where she met and later married Austrian triathlete Marcel Dichtler. She became an Austrian citizen and qualified to represent them at Athens 2004. She was 44th after the swim in the Aegean, but rose to 28th (still some three minutes behind the leaders) after a good bike ride. Her performance in the run was superb. Allen finally took over the lead from Australia's Loretta Harrop in the last 200 metres and went on to win by a margin of 6.72 seconds.

## PAYING THE PRICE

In the last 300 metres of the Beijing 2008 men's Triathlon, Sydney 2000 gold medallist Simon Whitfield and Athens 2004 silver medallist Bevan Docherty were in the lead group. Docherty made a break, only for German Jan Frodeno – who took up the sport while in South Africa and sold his bike to help fund his fare home – who was not noted for a sprint finish, to burst past everyone and win a surprise gold medal.

## SNOWSILL BEATS THE ODDS

Australia's Emma Snowsill overcame personal tragedy and serious injury to win gold at Beijing 2008. Her boyfriend, fellow triathlete Luke Harrop, had been killed by a car in a hit-and-run accident while training in 2002. The following year, she became world champion, but suffered a stress fracture of the femur, which ruled her out of contention for the Australian team at Athens 2004. She won the World Championships in 2005, took the 2006 Commonwealth title and then won the world title again to seal her place in Beijing. There she led as the field completed the bike ride, and eventually had established such a lead that she was able to pause to grab an Australian flag from a fan before crossing the line – a minute ahead of her nearest rivals.

## CARRY ON ... IN THE HEAT

At the men's Triathlon at Athens 2004, Great Britain's Marc Jenkins had his medal prospects ended by a crash midway through the cycling leg. With broken spokes his bike was impossible to ride. He refused to retire, but the wheel was so badly buckled that he was forced to carry the bike on his shoulders in blistering heat for nearly two kilometres to the next repair point. When he finally reached the finish line he received a standing ovation from the crowd, even though he was in last place, some 15 minutes behind the winner.

➔ *Great Britain's Marc Jenkins feels the heat during the men's Triathlon at Athens 2004.*



↑ *The Brownlee brothers were two of the leading contenders in the men's Triathlon at London 2012 and both finished on the podium.*

## BROTHERS ON THE PODIUM

Triathlon and Olympic officials had been concerned about how they should react if family loyalties prompted the Brownlee brothers – Alistair and Jonathan – to cross the gold medal-winning line together – as was a definite possibility, if not even a probability. In the event both won medals, but a joint finish was not an issue. Elder brother Alistair always looked in command of the race. Jonny, however, collected a 15-second time penalty for an over-hasty transition along the way. This meant they were split at the finish by Spain's former world champion Javier Gomez. Alistair still had more than enough time to drape a Union Flag around his shoulders and to walk over the line in one hour 46 minutes 25 seconds. He and Jonny, with gold and bronze, were the first siblings to feature together on the Olympic medals podium in an individual event in more than 50 years.

## SPIRIG MAKES A SPLASH – JUST

The battle for gold in the women's Triathlon competition at London 2012 was so tight that the result could not be confirmed until the facts and statistics had been reviewed by the Court of Arbitration for Sport. Switzerland's Nicola Spirig and Lisa Norden of Sweden crossed the finish line in identical times of 1.59:48 and only a photo-finish gave the victory to Spirig. Swedish Olympic and Triathlon officials asked for the pair to be ranked as joint winners, but sport's supreme court ruled that it could not intervene in a 'field-of-play decision'. Judges decided that Spirig's torso had been a little less than 15 centimetres ahead of Norden when the two finished – an incredibly slender margin after almost two hours of swimming, cycling and running.



# RACKET SPORTS

A flourishing racket sports programme now counts Tennis, Table Tennis and Badminton among its medal competitions







◀ Andy Murray returned to Wimbledon a few weeks after losing the grand slam tennis championship final, but made no mistake in the London 2012 men's Singles final, beating top seed Roger Federer in three sets.



# BADMINTON

Badminton was initially a demonstration sport at Munich 1972, but had to wait until Barcelona 1992 before making its first full-medal appearance at the Games. Olympic Badminton competitors compete in both Singles and Doubles events (for both men and women) as well as Mixed Doubles competitions. China leads the all-time medal count with 38, 16 of which have been gold.

## MOVING SUCCESS

Mia Audina has won Olympic Games medals in Badminton for two different countries. Born in Jakarta, Indonesia, she was a child prodigy at the sport. She was chosen for the 1996 Games in Atlanta at the tender age of 16 years 338 days and, unsurprisingly, she was the youngest player ever to enter a Badminton tournament at the Games. She went on to reach the final of the women's Singles, losing to Korean Soo-hyun Bang. Audina later married a Dutchman and moved to the Netherlands, where she became a Dutch citizen. She represented her new country at Sydney 2000 and at Athens 2004, where she again reached the final. By now a comparative veteran at 24, she was beaten once again, this time by China's Zhang Ning.

## PEER PRESSURE

Badminton can trace its origins to early games played in India, China and Greece. Previously known as battledore or shuttlecock, the sport takes its name from one of the stately homes of England – Badminton in Gloucestershire, the ancestral home of the Duke of Beaufort. His Grace enthusiastically championed the sport in the 1870s, teaching visitors to his home how to play. A shuttlecock can be either synthetic or use goose or duck feathers.

## SUPER STAR

At Beijing 2008, home favourite Dan Lin reached the men's Singles final without dropping a set. A soldier in the Chinese People's Liberation Army, and ranked No. 1 in the world that year, he was known as 'Super Dan'. He lived up to his nickname in the final, in which he swept aside the challenge of Malaysia's Chong Wei Lee to take the gold medal.

◀ Dan Lin became China's second men's Singles champion at Beijing 2008.



## NO JOKE FOR KOREANS

Soo-hyun Bang, daughter of a popular Korean comedian, was deadly serious about Badminton and lost only one match in her entire Olympic Games career. That single defeat came in the final of the women's Singles in 1992, which she lost to Indonesia's Susi Susanti. Four years later, in Atlanta, she faced Susanti once more, this time at the semi-final stage, in which she avenged her Barcelona defeat. She played another Indonesian, Mia Audina, in the final and made her experience tell to win the gold medal.

◀ Soo-hyun Bang took the women's Singles title at Atlanta 1996.

## EUROPE'S BEST YET

At Athens 2004, for the only time in any Badminton event at the Games, three European pairs reached the last four of the Mixed Doubles. In the all-European semi-final, Nathan Robertson and Gail Emms from Great Britain beat Denmark's Jonas Rasmussen and Rikke Olsen to reach the final. They had to settle for the silver medal, though, losing to defending champions Jun Zhang and Ling

Gao from China, but the British pair came to within four points of the gold medal. The pair took gold at the 2006 World Championships, but were knocked out in the quarter-final at Beijing 2008.



◀ Nathan Robertson and Gail Emms celebrate their Mixed Doubles semi-final victory at Athens 2004.



## DETERMINED DANES

Denmark have been the most successful European nation in Badminton events at the Games. Thomas Stuer-Lauridsen was the first player from outside Asia to win a medal when Badminton made its debut appearance at Barcelona 1992. He lost to the eventual winner Alan Budikusuma (Indonesia) in the semi-final. At the first tournament, both losing semi-finalists were awarded bronze medals. Subsequently a third-place play-off was introduced. At Atlanta 1996, Denmark's Poul Erik Hoyer Larsen beat defending champion Alan Budikusuma and world champion Heryanto Arbi on the way to the final, in which he beat Chinese world number one Jiong Dong to become the Games' first, and to date only, non-Asian Singles gold medallist.

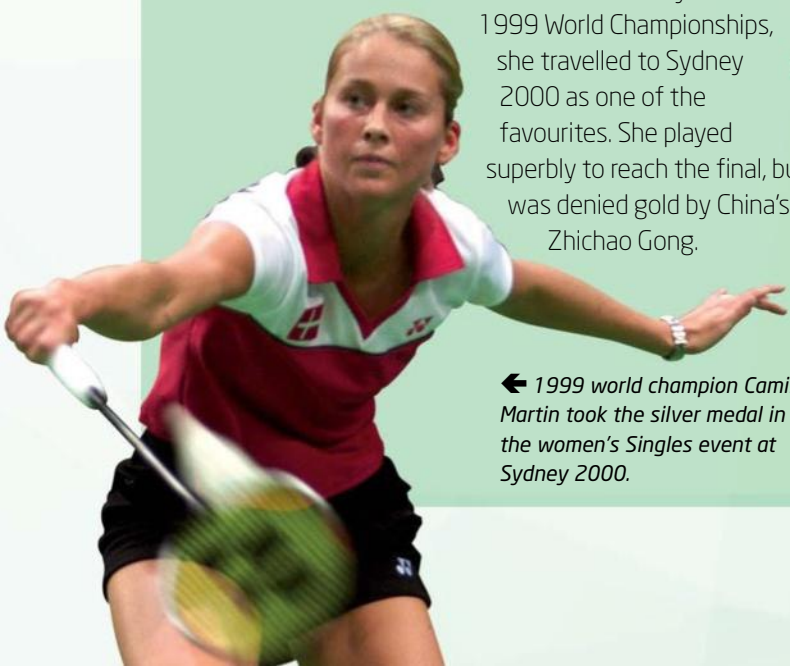
## SUSANTI KEEPS IT IN THE FAMILY

Indonesia's Susi Susanti had already become a national hero for winning back-to-back All England titles when she travelled to Barcelona for the 1992 Games. There she beat Korea's Soo-hyun Bang in the women's Singles final to seal her place in her country's sporting hall of fame. Hers was the first Olympic Games gold medal ever won by an Indonesian. That same day, her husband-to-be, Alan Budikusuma, overcame his fellow countryman Ardy Wiranata to win gold in the men's Singles. Their twin triumphs sparked tremendous scenes back in Jakarta when they returned home. There was a huge victory parade through the streets, led by a car carrying a giant shuttlecock. The couple each received a bonus of US\$500,000 and they were married after the 1996 Games in Atlanta. Although neither had completed the fairytale with another gold medal, Susanti did win a Singles bronze.

## MARTIN SETTLES FOR SILVER

Denmark's Camilla Martin was the first European woman to win an individual Olympic Games medal for Badminton. Back home, she was considered the best female player of her generation and, in a land where standards are very high, she won 13 consecutive national titles. After victory at the 1999 World Championships, she travelled to Sydney 2000 as one of the favourites. She played superbly to reach the final, but was denied gold by China's Zhichao Gong.

← 1999 world champion Camilla Martin took the silver medal in the women's Singles event at Sydney 2000.



## ZHAO AT THE DOUBLE

China's Yunlei Zhao made history at London 2012 when she and Qing Tian – their country's No.2 partnership – crushed Japan's Mizuki Fujii and Reika Kakiwa to win gold in the women's Doubles in an exhilarating tournament. Zhao thus became the first player to win Badminton gold medals in two events at the same Games, having already won the all-China Mixed Doubles final with partner Nan Zhang. The stream of Chinese talent did not stop there. A 21-year-old comparative newcomer, Xuerui Li, cruised through the women's Singles and secured gold by defeating top-seeded compatriot Yihan Wang in the final. Xin Wang was not so fortunate. She retired hurt in the bronze-medal match, which left India celebrating a maiden Badminton medal for Saina Nehwal.

## SUPER DAN'S THE MAN

'Super Dan' Dan Lin ranks as perhaps the finest player of all time after successfully repeating his gold-medal success in the Badminton men's Singles competition. The London 2012 final was a superb repeat of the Beijing 2008 contest against Malaysia's Chong Wei Lee. This time, Lee came within two points of gold, but ultimately was left facing the end of his career without ever having won an Olympic, world or Asian Games title. Lin is only male player to retain the Olympic men's Singles title – yet another feat to rank alongside his unique career achievement as the only man to have completed the 'Super Grand Slam' of all nine major titles in the sport. China took all five Badminton gold medals available at London 2012. Veterans Yun Cai and Haifeng Fu succeeded in the men's Doubles, beating Denmark's Mathias Boe and Carsten Mogensen, against whom they had come up short at Beijing 2008.

↓ Dan Lin salutes the crowd after retaining his Badminton men's Singles title at London 2012.





# TABLE TENNIS

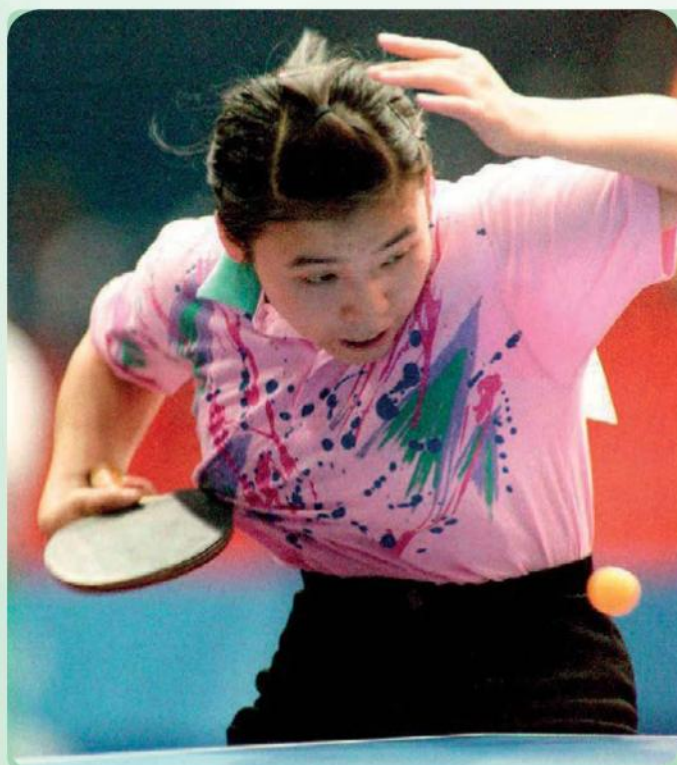
Both singles and Doubles events (for men and women) in Table Tennis have been contested since the Seoul Olympics back in 1988, with Team events introduced for the first time at Beijing 2008 to replace the Doubles event. China continues to dominate the sport's all-time medal table at the Games. The nation has accrued an impressive 47 Table Tennis medals (24 of them gold).

## CHINESE CLEAN SWEEP

At Beijing 2008, host nation China won every single Table Tennis medal that was available to them. China's men beat out Germany in the final of the Team event, while their women's team won their final against Singapore to add a second gold to their haul. Lin Ma won the men's Singles title (with compatriots Hao Wang taking silver and Liqin Wang bronze); and Yining Zhang won the women's Singles event (with compatriots Nan Wang taking silver and Yue Guo bronze).

## KING KONG

Chinese men's Doubles pairing Linghui Kong and Guoliang Liu teamed up to devastating effect at the Olympic Games at Atlanta in 1996. They lost only one game as they steamrollered their way to the gold medal. Liu also won the men's Singles at the same Games. Four years later, in Sydney, it was Kong's turn to win the men's Singles final, after a tremendous struggle against Sweden's Jan Ove Waldner.



## OUT OF DATE...

On the eve of the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, China's Table Tennis squad was thrown into turmoil by what officials described as a 'dating scandal'. Reigning Mixed Doubles champion Lin Ma began a relationship with another member of the squad. His girlfriend was dropped from the group because Chinese officials felt as though her presence would have an unsettling effect on the both the squad and its training programme. Ma himself was only spared the axe because his world ranking at the time was so high. The selectors' decision was vindicated, however, when (in partnership with Qi Chen) he went on to take gold in the men's Doubles. Four years later, in Beijing, Ma won the men's Singles event, beating compatriot Hao Wang in the final, and was also a member of the Chinese trio that took Team gold.

## COMRADE CHAMPION

Chinese star Nan Wang won two gold medals at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. She won the women's Doubles and beat her doubles partner Ju Li in the Singles final. Her success brought with it some unexpected fringe benefits, such as being elected as a district representative to the Chinese Communist Party Congress. She retained her Doubles title with a new partner, Yining Zhang, at Athens 2004 and won further gold for China as part of the victorious squad in the Team event at Beijing 2008. China's dominance of the Table Tennis competition at the 2004 Games was broken only when the Republic of Korea's Seung Min Ryu took gold in the men's Singles with a dramatic win over China's Hao Wang. The match went the full distance, and even in victory the Korean conceded that his opponent had been the better player.

## LITTLE GIANT

China's Yaping Deng had always been considered too short to make the grade in international Table Tennis. A child prodigy, who won regional tournaments at the age of nine, she was originally ignored by the Chinese selectors because of her height. Eventually, though, they were forced to relent and she was picked for the national team aged only 15 in 1988, by which time she had reached her adult height of 4ft ½in (1.49m). She partnered Hong Qiao to win the World Championships doubles and went on to win the singles title in 1991. Her persistence in never taking no for an answer was rewarded when she was selected for China's team for the 1992 Games in Barcelona, and she took gold in the women's Doubles with Qiao. Two days later, the pair faced one another in the women's Singles final and Deng won an epic encounter, 21-6, 21-8, 15-21, 23-21. She retained both her titles at Atlanta 1996 and, in 2003, she was voted China's female athlete of the century and was also chosen for the IOC Athletes' Commission.

◀ *China's Yaping Deng silenced those who said she was too short to play the game when she won the women's Singles and women's Doubles Table Tennis events at Barcelona 1992.*





## TAKEN FOR A RIDE

Chinese men's Doubles pairing Lin Lu and Tao Wang very nearly did not make it to their final at the 1992 Games in Barcelona. The bus that was supposed to take them from the Olympic Village to the arena failed to arrive, so they started out on foot. Eventually, they were able to hail a taxi and reached the venue in the nick of time. Their match against the German pair Steffen Fetzner and Jörg Rosskopf went the full distance, before the Chinese duo took gold.

← China's Lin Lu (left) and Tao Wang (right) celebrate after they beat Germany's Steffen Fetzner and Jörg Rosskopf in the men's Doubles final at Barcelona 1992.

## SPORTING CHANCE

China's Zhimin Jiao won bronze in the women's Singles and silver in the women's Doubles at Seoul 1988, but it was her romance with South Korea's men's Doubles bronze medallist Jae-Hyeong An that hit the headlines. The pair married in 1989, even though their countries had no diplomatic ties at the time, and had a son, Byeong-Hun An, who turned out to be a brilliant golfer and won the 2009 US Amateur Championship aged only 17.

## WALDNER BREAKTHROUGH

At Barcelona 1992, Sweden's Jan Ove Waldner became the first non-Asian player to win an Olympic Games gold medal. After being knocked out in the quarter-finals of the inaugural Table Tennis tournament at the 1988 Games, he was unstoppable four years later, dropping only one game on the way to the final, in which he beat Frenchman Jean-Philippe Gatien. He played in the first five Table Tennis tournaments at the Games, winning silver at Sydney 2000. His final Games appearance came at Athens 2004, aged 38.

## BORED OF WINNING?

Germany's Timo Boll has been in the world's top 10 for Table Tennis for all but two months since February 2002 and he hoped to stir up the dominant Chinese in the Table Tennis tournament at the London 2012 Olympics. In the event he was out of luck, however Europe's top men's player did enjoy the consolation of beating Jike Zhang, the men's Singles gold-medal winner, in the Team semi-final – even though Germany still lost the match 3–1. But the men's tournament did offer hints from Europe and Japan that the Chinese may not have it all their own way in future Olympic Games. Their dominance might even prove their undoing. 'I think even the Chinese are getting bored at China winning all the time,' said Boll as he and his German team celebrated winning the bronze medal. One of the moments of the tournament came during Nigeria's Quadri Aruna's first-round victory over Spain's Carlos Machado. Aruna lost a shoe during a winning rally in the match he won, but he was knocked out of the tournament in the next round.

## MORE WORLD DOMINATION FOR CHINA

In the women's events at London 2012, Xiaoxia Li matched the double-winning achievements of Jike Zhang in the men's competition. She beat compatriot Ning Ding in the women's Single final and they then formed, with Yue Guo, a formidable women's Team that took every one of their matches 3–0. China thus took all the four gold medals, just as they had done at Beijing 2008. They have collected 24 of the 28 gold medals awarded since Table Tennis became an Olympic sport in 1988, and 19 of the last 20. Organisers estimated that more than 180,000 spectators had attended the tournament at London 2012 including software billionaire Bill Gates and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

↓ China's Table Tennis squad won all four gold medals and silver, too, in the men's and women's Singles at London 2012.





# TENNIS

Tennis was one of the sports contested at the inaugural modern Games at Athens 1896 and subsequently featured at each of the first seven Games before being controversially dropped after Paris 1924. After two further appearances as a demonstration sport (in 1968 and 1984), it made a welcome return to the full-medal programme at the Seoul Games in 1988.



## ON TARGET IN LONDON

Charlotte 'Lottie' Dod may have been a five-times women's Singles champion at Wimbledon, but her only appearance at the Olympic Games came in the sport of Archery. She won a silver medal in the women's Individual competition at London 1908.

↑ *Legendary five-time Wimbledon singles winner Lottie Dod made a surprise appearance in Archery at London 1908 and won silver.*

## GOLDEN GAMBLE

Great Britain's Kitty McKane reached the last four in the women's Singles in 1920 but then, amazingly, withdrew from her semi-final against compatriot Edith Holman so as to conserve her energy to partner Winnie McNair in the women's Doubles semi-final. The Britons were up against the legendary French player Suzanne Lenglen, partnered by her compatriot Elizabeth d'Ayen. The ploy paid off: the British women won in three sets to claim gold.

## GREEK CLASSIC

John Pius Boland, an Irishman studying at Christ's College, Oxford, was the first man to win a Tennis title at the Olympic Games. During the Easter holidays in 1896, he accompanied a Greek friend to Athens, where the first Games of the modern era were about to take place. He was persuaded to take part in the Tennis competition, despite having had little experience of tournament play. Still, he won Singles gold and then partnered the German Fritz Traun to success in the Doubles.

## TENNIS COMEBACK

Exhibition and demonstration events in Tennis were held at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City as the sport sought readmission to the official Games programme. But it was the demonstration event in 1984 that really paved the way for the sport's return. The competition in Los Angeles was an age-group affair (players had to be under 20); Sweden's Stefan Edberg won the men's Singles event, with West Germany's Steffi Graf winning the women's Singles.

## INS AND OUTS IN LONDON

At the 1908 Games in London, the Tennis programme featured both indoor and outdoor tournaments. The indoor competitions were held at the Queen's Club in West Kensington, London. Arthur Wentworth Gore won an all-British final against George Caridia in straight sets. Inspired by his success, he also won Wimbledon the following year at the grand old age of 41. A stalwart of the All England Club, he had competed there every year since 1888.

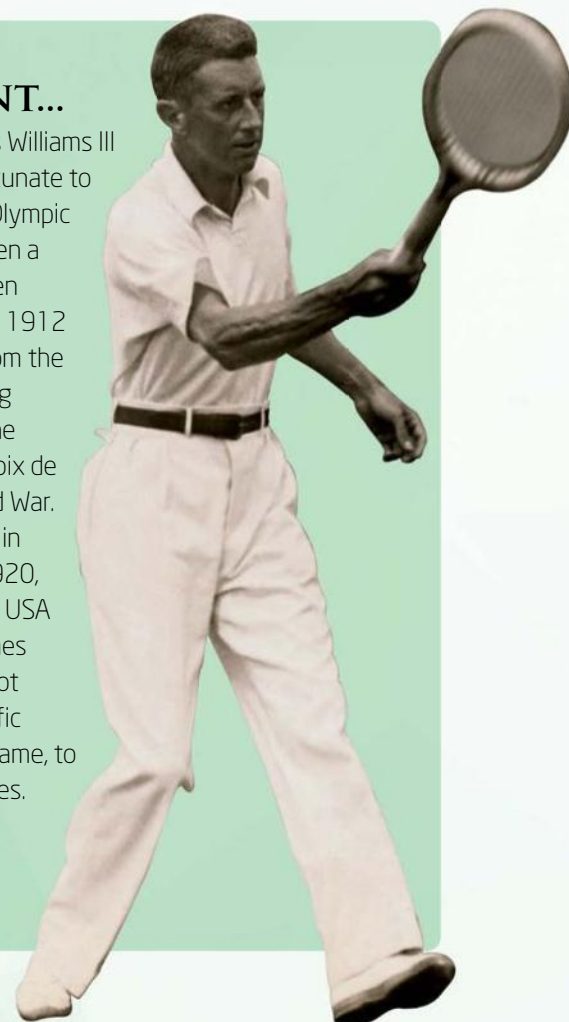
## WINNING FOR WOMEN

Great Britain provided the first female winner in Tennis at the Olympic Games. In fact, Charlotte Cooper was the first woman to win any title at the Games. She beat Helene Prevost in straight sets to win Singles gold at Paris 1900. She also won gold in the Mixed Doubles, with R.F. 'Reggie' Doherty.

## TITANIC ACHIEVEMENT...

American Richard Norris Williams III could count himself fortunate to have taken part in the Olympic Games at all. He had been a passenger on the maiden voyage of the Titanic in 1912 and had swum away from the sinking ship before being rescued. He served in the military and won the Croix de Guerre in the First World War. A Wimbledon champion in the men's Doubles in 1920, he was selected for the USA team for the 1924 Games and partnered compatriot Hazel Wightman, a prolific player in the women's game, to gold in the Mixed Doubles.

➔ *Richard Norris Williams III was a Titanic survivor and a gold medallist at Paris 1924.*







↑ *Victory in the women's Tennis final at Seoul 1988 saw Steffi Graf complete a memorable 'Golden Slam'.*

## GRAF'S HISTORY LESSON

1988 proved a golden year for Germany's Steffi Graf. When Tennis made its re-entry to the Games programme in Seoul, she became the first winner of the women's Singles title. She had already won the Australian, French, Wimbledon and US Open titles, the latter only a week before the Games began. Her straight-sets win over Argentina's Gabriela Sabatini thus converted her 'Grand Slam' into what remains a unique 'Olympic Slam'.

## WONDERS OF WIMBLEDON

Andy Murray walked away from Wimbledon in July 2012 burning with the pain of losing to Switzerland's Roger Federer in the All-England Championships final. Three weeks later, he was back to turn the tables on Federer in the men's Singles final and take the bonus of Mixed Doubles silver. The Scot swept aside the world No. 1 in straight sets, 6-2 6-1 6-4, before he and 21-year-old Laura Robson lost 2-6, 6-3, 10-8 to top seeds Max Mirnyi and Victoria Azarenka of Belarus. Murray, the first Briton to win Olympic Tennis men's Singles gold since Josiah Ritchie at London 1908, described his victory as: 'The biggest win of my life. The support has been amazing, as at all the events. I had watched the athletics and the way Mo Farah won gave me a boost coming into my own final.' The 25-year-old climbed up into the stands after his victory to celebrate with mother Judy, girlfriend Kim Sears, family, friends and aides. Federer, gracious in defeat, said: 'For me, it's been a great month. I won Wimbledon, became world No. 1 again, and I got silver. Don't feel too bad for me. Credit Andy for getting in the lead and then using the crowd to his advantage to come through. He did it unbelievably well.' Earlier, the USA's Serena and Venus Williams retained their women's Doubles title with a 6-4, 6-4 win over the Czech Republic's Andrea Hlavackova and Lucie Hradecka. The sisters had also won Doubles gold at Sydney 2000 and Beijing 2008. With one Singles title each, they thus became the first Tennis players to win four golds each. Serena crushed Maria Sharapova 6-0, 6-1 in the women's Singles final.

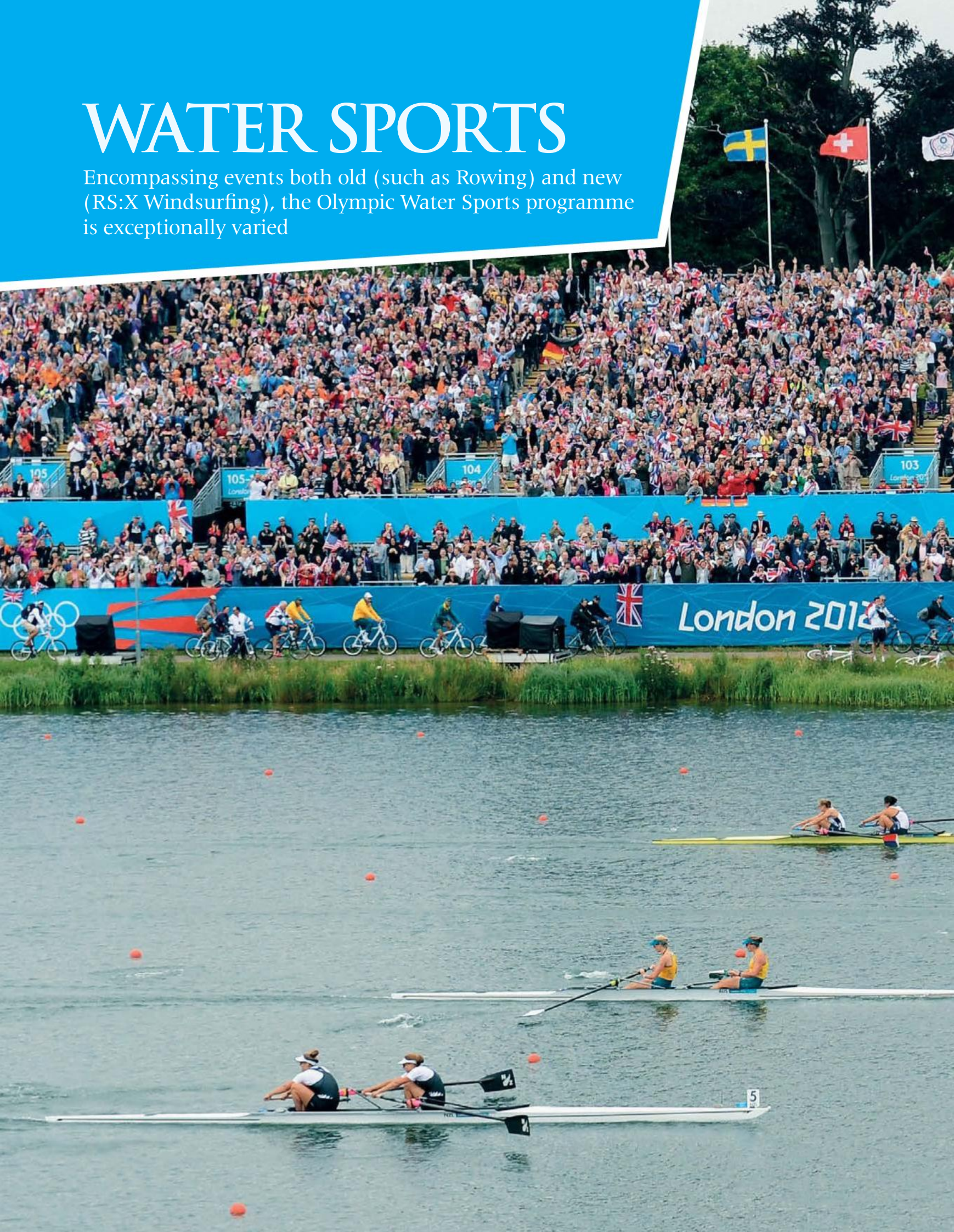


← *The Williams sisters, Serena (left) and Venus, added a third women's Doubles gold to their Olympic Games medal collection at London 2012.*

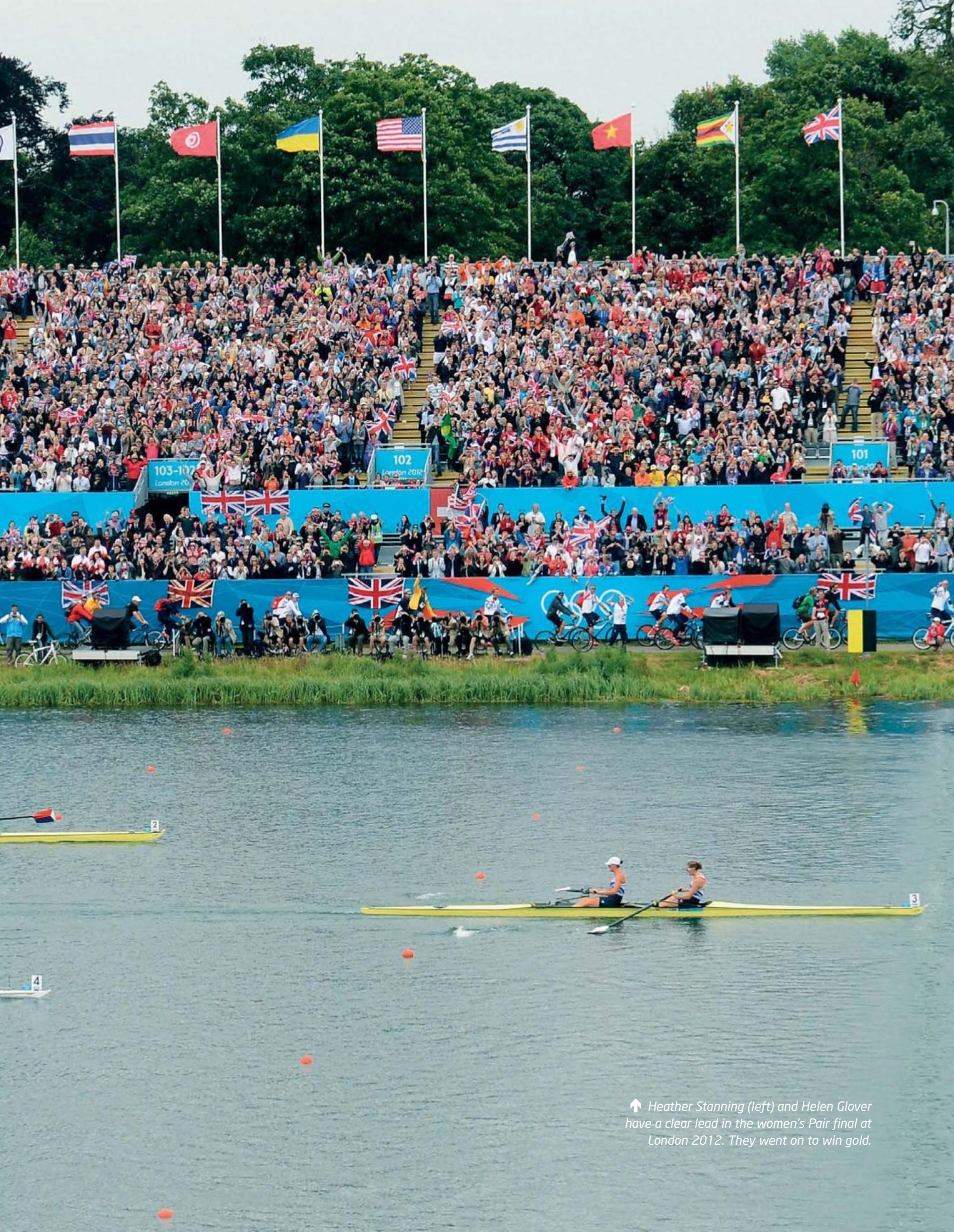


# WATER SPORTS

Encompassing events both old (such as Rowing) and new (RS:X Windsurfing), the Olympic Water Sports programme is exceptionally varied







↑ Heather Stanning (left) and Helen Glover have a clear lead in the women's Pair final at London 2012. They went on to win gold.



# CANOEING AND KAYAKING

Two types of boat feature in this category: canoes, for one or two canoeists; and kayaks, for one, two or four kayakers. Slalom events were contested for the first time at Munich 1972, while Sprint events made their bow in 1936. The latter take place over 200m and 1000m for men, and 200m and 500m for women.

## FAMILY FORTUNES

Frenchman Tony Estanguet not only performed with distinction at London 2012, but he also maintained family honour. Having won men's Canoe Single gold in at Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004, he regained the title he had lost at Beijing 2008 to his old Slovak rival Michal Martikan, another double Olympic gold medallist. In a superb final, run the Frenchman finished ahead of Germany's Sideris Tasiadis. Martikan had to settle for bronze, his fifth Olympic medal after gold at Atlanta 1996 and Beijing 2008 as well as silver at Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004. Estanguet's father, Henri, won medals at the Whitewater Canoe World Championships in the 1970s, while elder brother Patrice won bronze at Atlanta 1996.

↓ *Michal Martikan won men's C-1 gold at Atlanta 1996 and silver in the same event at Sydney 2000.*



↑ *Twins Peter (back) and Pavol Hochschorner of Slovakia on their way to C-2 gold at Sydney 2000.*

## TRIPLE DOUBLE DOUBLE

The 2000, 2004 and 2008 Canoe Doubles gold medals were all won by a pair of prolific twins from Slovakia, Pavol and Peter Hochschorner.

## ELASTIC COURSE

The first Olympic Slalom course, built for Munich 1972, was 600 metres long and included 30 gates. When the event was next held, at Barcelona 1992, it was 340m long and, at Atlanta 1996, 415m.

## EAST BEATS WEST

For the 1972 Games in Munich, the West German hosts spent DM17 million (US\$4m) constructing an artificial river at Augsburg. A year before the Games, their East German counterparts studied the facilities and replicated them in Zwickau. And how it paid dividends: the East Germans took gold in all four Slalom events at the Games.

## DOUBLE GOLD

Slovakia's Elena Kaliska completed a rare Games double at Beijing 2008, as she successfully defended the women's Kayak Singles title that she had won at Athens 2004.

## SO NEAR, YET SO FAR

Britain's Lynn Simpson, then the reigning women's Kayak Singles world champion, unfortunately failed to live up to her billing as favourite at Atlanta 1996: she missed the 11th gate during her second run and finished in 23rd place.

## TEMPORARY RIVER

The Canoe events at Atlanta 1996 were staged on the Ocoee River in Tennessee – but there was a problem. The site of the course had been dry for almost 50 years and, although water had been redirected into the riverbed in 1994, it was diverted through a tunnel to a power plant to create electricity. In 1996 the water was released through one of the three dams into the 1-mile course for 77 days to allow for training, pre-Olympic events and the Games themselves.



## BIRG' THE BEST

Birgit Fischer-Schmidt is the most successful canoeist at the Games, having competed over a record 24-year period between 1980 and 2004, during which time she won a record eight golds and four silvers for East Germany and Germany. Her record of eight golds is shared with Hungarian fencer Aladar Gerevich, although Fischer-Schmidt achieved that total in just six Games – one fewer than Gerevich.

➔ *Birgit Fischer-Schmidt celebrates an eighth gold medal at Athens 2004.*



## TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

Matija Ljubek won gold and bronze medals for Yugoslavia at Montreal 1976 in the men's C-1 1000m and C-1 500m, and added two more medals in 1984 before becoming vice-president of the Croatian Olympic Committee. In 2000, however, Ljubek was shot dead while defending his mother from an estranged brother-in-law.

## KAYAKING IN THE BLOOD

After winning a bronze medal in the men's Kayak Single (K1) 1000m at Sydney 2000, Tim Brabants delayed his medical studies to train for Athens 2004, where he finished fifth in the final. Having returned to medicine for a year, Brabants renewed his full-time sporting efforts in preparation for Beijing 2008. He won the Kayak Single (K1) 1000m gold and bronze in the Kayak Single (K1) 500m. Job done, he thought – and Brabants returned to medicine. A year later, however, he was back to full-time training once again, unable to resist the lure of London 2012. He made the final yet again, but finished in eighth.

➔ *Great Britain's Tim Brabants powers his way to Kayak Single 1000m gold at the Beijing Olympics.*



## ELECTRIFYING SPEED

Cliff Meidl, who represented the USA in the Kayak Four event at Atlanta 1996 and in the Kayak Single at Sydney 2000, was so severely electrocuted at the age of 20 – while working for a construction company he received 30,000 volts, 200 times more than is normally used for the electric chair – he suffered three cardiac arrests and was unable to walk unaided for three years.

## GERT THE GREAT

Sweden's Gert Fredriksson has been the most successful male kayaker at the Games. He won six golds, one silver and one bronze from 1948 to 1960, all in the Kayak Single competition. Three golds in a single Games have been achieved by Vladimir Parfenovich, a 21-year-old PE instructor from Minsk, in the Soviet Union, in 1980, and Ian Ferguson of New Zealand four years later. Ferguson had retired after finishing seventh at Moscow 1980, but returned to the sport when the New Zealand Sports Federation offered kayakers increased financial support.

**“GERT FREDRIKSSON WON AN AMAZING SIX GOLDS, ONE SILVER AND ONE BRONZE IN KAYAKING AT THE GAMES FROM 1948 TO 1960”**

## IN AND OUT

Sprinting events have been part of the Olympic Games programme since 1936 for men, and since 1948 for women. Kayak Single and Double races over 10,000 metres were held from 1936 to 1956, then discontinued thereafter.

## SWEDISH FLOURISH

The best medal haul at a single Games by one woman is the two golds and a silver amassed by Sweden's Agneta Andersson at the 1984 Games in Los Angeles. That feat was equalled at the 1988 Games in Seoul – by Germany's legendary canoeist Birgit Fischer-Schmidt, of course.

## SILVER TO GOLD

Greg Barton, a mechanical engineer from Michigan, USA, won the K-1 1000m event at Seoul 1988, then lost it, then won it again – at least, that is how it seemed. Barton, who had been born with two club feet, was told immediately after his race by officials that he had narrowly beaten Grant Davies to win the gold medal. However, the scoreboard showed him as the silver medallist and the Australian started to celebrate. As Barton prepared for the Kayak Double final, however, the jury of the International Canoe Federation studied the finish-line photo and duly announced that the American had won it after all – by 0.005 seconds, or less than a centimetre. So, in this bizarre manner, Barton became the first US kayaker to win gold at the Games.







**DOUBLE TOP FOR BRITAIN**

One of the most remarkable achievements to take place at the Lee Valley White Water Centre during London 2012 was Great Britain's sweep of gold and silver in the men's Canoe Slalom Double (C2). Tim Baillie and Etienne Stott were ranked sixth in the world at the start of competition, for which they could only enter because the other Britons – David Florence and Richard Hounslow – had qualified as individuals. Remarkably, Baillie and Stott set the standard and Florence and Hounslow came down the course last to take silver behind them and ahead of Peter and Pavol Hochschorner. The Slovak twins, invincible world champions for three years, had been chasing a fourth consecutive gold medal in the event.

← *Tim Baillie (left) and Etienne Stott led a Great Britain one-two in the men's Canoe Slalom Double (C2) at the London 2012 Games.*





# ROWING

A scheduled event at the inaugural modern Games at Athens 1896 – only for the regatta to be cancelled at short notice due to bad weather – Rowing has been contested at every Games since Paris 1900 (by men) and since Montreal 1976 (by women). The current Rowing programme for the Olympics involves 14 separate events, all of which are contested over a 2000m-long course.



↑ In the background, the Great Britain Coxless Four (from left: Steve Williams, James Cracknell, Ed Coode and Matthew Pinsent) celebrate gold at Athens 2004.

## RECORDS EVENTUALLY RECOGNISED

The Rowing events at recent Olympic Games have been held on still water, but weather conditions were considered too variable for official records to be set. However, as courses are now strictly regulated – they are a straight 2000 metres (1.24 miles) – records are recognised. The fastest average speed by a men's Eight is 22.51 km/h (13.98 mph), by the United States crew when they clocked 5:19.85 in a heat at Los Angeles 1984. Automatic timing was introduced at Rome 1960, and the narrowest winning margin in a men's event was when Great Britain's Coxless Four beat Canada by 0.08 seconds at Athens 2004.

## KELLY GOLD

Just 30 minutes after the USA's John Kelly Senior had narrowly defeated Britain's Jack Beresford in the Single Sculls final at Antwerp 1920 – after which both men were so exhausted they could not shake hands – he had recovered sufficiently to add another gold medal in the Double Sculls, in the company of Paul Costello. Kelly Senior, who won a record third gold with Costello four years later, had two children who also made their mark on the world. Son John Kelly Junior won a bronze medal at Melbourne 1956, and daughter Grace Kelly became a Hollywood film star before marrying Prince Rainier of Monaco.



↑ A butcher by trade and a long-standing member of the Vesta Rowing Club in Putney, London, Henry Blackstaffe won the gold medal at London 1908.

## EXPERIENCE PAYS OFF

At 40, the London 1908 Single Sculls gold-medal winner Henry Blackstaffe, who worked as a butcher, was twice the age of silver medallist Alexander McCulloch, but finished more than a length ahead of his fellow Briton.

## ROWING FOR HIS LIFE

Hugh 'Jumbo' Edwards, who won gold medals in the Coxless Pairs and Coxless Fours in the space of a single day at the 1932 Games in Los Angeles, used his prowess on the water to secure his personal safety 11 years later when, as an RAF squadron leader, he had to ditch his plane in the Atlantic Ocean and row four miles through a minefield.

## CHILD'S PLAY

Benjamin Spock, a 6ft 4in student from Yale University, was in the USA eight that won gold at the 1924 Games in Paris. After graduating from medical school, Spock became a paediatrician and, in 1945, published a book – The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care – that went on to sell more than 50 million copies in over 30 languages.

↓ Benjamin Spock (sitting third from right) in action with the USA eight at the 1924 Games in Paris.







↑ *The Soviet Union's Coxless Pair team of Victor Ivanov (left) and Igor Buldakov (right) in action at the Henley Regatta in 1957.*

## THROWING AWAY THE PRIZE

Viktor Ivanov, an 18-year-old rower from the Soviet Union, was so thrilled at finishing second behind the United States in the Coxless Pairs at Melbourne 1956 that during the presentation ceremony he jumped up and down with joy – and dropped his silver medal into Lake Wendouree. Ivanov, who had partnered Igor Buldakov, dived into the water to search for it, but could not find it. After the Games, however, the International Olympic Committee took pity on him and gave him a replacement medal.

## NO GO ROWS

The line-up of Rowing events at the Games has changed over the years. In 1996, the Coxed Pairs and Coxed Fours, which had both been a part of the programme since 1900, were discontinued. Three other events made only one appearance at a Games: the Six-Man Naval Rowing Boats (won by Italy in 1906); the 17-Man Naval Rowing Boats (won by Greece in 1906); and the men's Coxed Four with Inriggers (won by Denmark in 1912). Quadruple Sculls were introduced to the Games in 1976, and Lightweight Double Sculls and Fours became part of the programme in 1996.

## FIVE IN A ROW

Jack Beresford – whose father Julius won a silver medal in the Four-oared Shell with Coxswain at Stockholm 1912 – earned his place in Great Britain's Rowing team for the Antwerp 1920 Olympic Games by winning the single sculls at that year's Henley Regatta and went on to take men's Single Sculls silver at the Games. Competing in the same event at Paris 1924, however, he went one better to win his first gold medal. A switch to the men's Eights for Amsterdam 1928 yielded a silver medal, before he moved to the men's Fours at Los Angeles 1932, where he claimed his second gold. His final appearance at the Games came at Berlin 1936, when at the age of 37, he partnered Dick Southwood to gold in the men's Double Sculls. In doing so, Beresford had become the first rower in history to win medals at five consecutive Olympic Games.

## OLDEST AND YOUNGEST

The oldest Rowing gold medallist in Olympic Games history was Robert Zimonyi, who coxed the United States eight at the 1964 Games in Tokyo aged 46 years 180 days. The oldest oarsman to win gold was Guy Nickalls, who was in the victorious British eight at the 1908 Games in London aged 41 years 261 days. Fellow Brit Julius Beresford was 44 years 20 days old when he won silver four years later. The youngest recorded gold medallist was Giliante D'Este, who was 18 years 141 days old when he rowed for Italy in the Coxed Fours at the 1928 Games in Amsterdam. The youngest medallist oarsman was Australia's Walter Howell, who was 16 years 346 days old when he was in the bronze medal-winning eight at Melbourne 1956. The youngest medal-winning cox was France's Noel Vandernotte, who won bronze in the Pairs and Fours at Berlin 1936 at the age of 12 years 232 days. The four included his father and uncle, Fernand and Marcel.

## REDGRAVE THE RECORD

Immediately after he had won Pairs gold in the company of Matthew Pinsent at the 1996 Games in Atlanta, an exhausted Steve Redgrave, having just won his fourth-successive gold medal at the Games, told a TV interviewer: 'If anyone sees me near a boat again, they have my permission to shoot me.' Four years later, however, Redgrave competed in the Four at Sydney 2000, collecting a record fifth-consecutive gold medal and bringing his medal total to six. Redgrave, who later that year was voted BBC Sports Personality of the Century, achieved his record despite discovering three years beforehand that he was diabetic, and he also required treatment for colitis shortly before the 2000 Games. His 1996 partner Pinsent, with whom he had won Pairs gold at Barcelona 1992, earned his third gold in the Four at Sydney 2000 and went on to add a fourth victory, also in the Four, at Athens 2004. Pinsent's fellow countryman Jack Beresford won one fewer gold medal, but two more silvers, as he became the first rower to win medals at five consecutive Games between 1920 and 1936.

If the 1940 Games, scheduled for Tokyo, had not been cancelled due to the Second World War, who knows what the record would have been?





## US WOMEN'S EIGHT'S ONCE UNOFFICIAL GAMES RECORD

Women's Rowing was first introduced to the Olympic Games at Montreal 1976, over a 1,000-metre (0.62 miles) course. From Seoul 1988, the course length was standardised to that of the men, at 2,000m (1.24 miles). As with the men's competition, records are now recognised in Olympic Rowing. At Los Angeles 1984, the US women's Eight won a heat in a time of 5:56.55 – at an average speed of 20.19km/h (12.54mph). This once-unofficial mark has since been recognised by the IOC, and is now the official Olympic record.

### LIPA – THE GREATEST?

Romania's Elisabeta Lipa lays claim to being the most successful Olympic Games rower of all time, matching Steve Redgrave's record of five gold medals when she won at Athens 2004, 20 years after her first victory, at Los Angeles 1984. Two additional silvers and a bronze meant that Lipa finished her Olympic Games career with a total of eight medals – more than any other rower, and two more than Redgrave's tally. Lipa's compatriots dominated the individual medal table at Athens 2004. Doina Ignat, a member of the eight that won three straight golds, has amassed four gold, one silver and one bronze medals, while Georgeta Damian's victory in the Pair at Beijing 2008 meant that she became the third rower in Olympic Games history to win five golds, having won in the Pair and Eight at the two previous Games. Viorica Susanu's total after the 2008 Games was four golds and a bronze, while Constanta Burcica has so far won three gold, one silver and one bronze medal in the Lightweight Double Sculls. Cox Elena Georgescu has also picked up five medals, three of them gold. Romania did not win a medal at London 2012 – their best result was fourth in the women's Eight final.

↓ Romania's Elisabeta Lipa (second left) celebrates her fifth and final gold medal at Athens 2004.



↑ Australia's Rachel Taylor (left) won women's Pairs gold at Sydney 2000 (with Kate Slatter) ... and left her medal in a taxi.

### TAXI TROUBLE

After taking silver in the women's Pairs at her home Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000, Australia's Rachael Taylor celebrated too enthusiastically ... and ended up leaving her medal in a taxi cab. Her plight was publicised and a Sydney taxi driver returned the medal to her after finding it underneath his back seat.

### LAUMANN THE BRAVE

Just 73 days before she was scheduled to race in the women's Single Sculls at Barcelona 1992, Canada's Silken Laumann, the reigning world champion, was involved in a shocking accident while warming up for a race in Essen, Germany. The 27-year-old's shell was rammed by that of the German Coxless Pair, Peter Holtzenbein and Cohn von Ettingshausen, and a piece of wood smashed into her lower right leg, fracturing the bone, cutting her calf muscles and causing extensive nerve and tissue damage. After helping to save her, both the German rowers fainted at the sight. Laumann was told she would need six months to recover, but after five operations, and despite having to walk with a cane and having to avoid standing up for more than quarter of an hour at a time, she achieved her target of competing at the Barcelona Games. Incredibly, she took the bronze medal. Four years later, she improved to silver, when she finished behind Belarus's Ekaterina Khodotovitch.

### TEAM GB GO ONE BETTER

Team GB dominated the regatta at London 2012. They headed the Rowing medals table with four gold, two silver and three bronze medals, the nine being one more than the team's previous record achieved at London 1908. It showed the remarkable progress the team had made since winning just two medals at Atlanta 1996.



## GRAINGER GOLD AT LAST

A hugely popular success at London 2012 was that of Anna Watkins and Katherine Grainger in the Double Sculls. A wave of relief also greeted their success because Grainger – a multiple World Championship and World Cup winner – had ‘only’ been a silver medallist at Sydney 2000, Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008. In their preparation, the duo tried as best they could to treat the event as ‘just another competition’. Grainger said: ‘It was really important that we made it as familiar as possible. We knew it was the final of the home Games with millions of people watching, but if we had looked at all that too closely it would have been overwhelming.’ Olympic victory left Grainger ‘free’ mentally to return to her PhD studies... in criminology.

➔ *Katherine Grainger (left), after three silver medals, celebrates after partnering Anna Watkins to women’s Double Sculls gold at London 2012.*



## NEW ZEALAND FLIERS

On the first day of the Rowing competition at London 2012, in the first heat of the men’s Pair competition, New Zealand’s Eric Murray and Hamish Bond shattered the world record with a time of 6:08.50. To no one’s surprise, they went on to win gold.

## GIFT OF LIFE

A mere four weeks to the hour after winning a silver medal behind Australia in the Coxless Pairs at the 1996 Games in Atlanta, United States rower Missy Schwen underwent a life-changing operation to donate one of her kidneys to her brother, Michael.

## LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENT

In 1986, ten years after helping the USA eight take bronze in the inaugural women’s Olympic Rowing event in Montreal, Anita DeFrantz became the first black woman to be selected to serve on the International Olympic Committee.



← *Helen Glover (left) and Heather Stanning celebrate their golden moment at Eton Dorney. It was the first of 29 triumphs for Team GB at London 2012.*

## FIRST STRIKE SUCCESS

One of the most significant of all Great Britain’s gold medals at London 2012 was the Pair victory of Helen Glover and Heather Stanning, because this was the Host Nation’s first gold in what proved to be a record modern haul of 29. British fans had to wait until five days after the Opening Ceremony to see Glover and Stanning led the women’s Pairs final from the first stroke. They were never challenged, achieving clear water by the 500m mark. This was also British women’s first Olympic Rowing gold. Glover, educated at Millfield and briefly a member of the England satellite hockey squad, had only taken up rowing in 2008 through the Sporting Giants scheme. She and Stanning broke through at international level in 2010.



# SAILING

Since the sport's Games debut at Paris 1900, results in Sailing have been determined on the basis of aggregate scores from a series of races, with the possibility of some results being discarded. The rules have altered over the years, as have the kinds of boats involved in competition. At London 2012, excluding the Windsurfer RS:X competition, there were five men's events and three for women.

## TAKE THE REST OF THE WEEK OFF

Britain's pairing of Rodney Pattison and Christopher Davies won four of their first six races in the Flying Dutchman class at Munich 1972, which meant they were certain of the gold medal without having to race on the final day. In the same class at Mexico City 1968, Pattison had partnered Iain Macdonald-Smith, scoring the lowest number of penalty points – three – in Games history. After being, they felt, unjustifiably disqualified for interference after finishing first in the opening race, they won the next five on the trot, then played safe in the last race to finish second and ended up taking gold by a margin of more than 40 points.

## ELVSTRÖM – THE GREAT DANE

Denmark's Paul Elvström can claim to be the most successful yachtsman in Games history after becoming the first man to achieve four successive gold medals – from 1948 to 1960. His Games career did not finish there: he competed at Mexico City 1968 in the Star class (in which he was fourth); the 1972 Soling class (17th); and the Tornado class in 1984 and 1988 (in which he was fourth and 15th respectively).

↓ *Denmark's Paul Elvström won the first of his four gold medals in the Firefly class at London 1948.*



↑ *After being outsmarted by Brazil's Robert Scheidt, Great Britain's Ben Ainslie had to be content with a silver medal in the Laser class at Atlanta 1996. He would go on to win gold in 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2012.*

## SCHEIDT'S TRAP

In the 1996 Laser class, Britain's 19-year-old Ben Ainslie went into the final race in silver-medal position, trailing Brazil's Robert Scheidt by two points. As a result, there was much pre-race manoeuvring between the two as they jockeyed for position before the gun went. After four false starts, officials raised the black flag, meaning that anyone who crossed the start line early would be disqualified. As Scheidt headed for the line at the fifth attempt, he gambled that Ainslie would have to stick close to him to prevent him getting a decisive lead – and that if he crossed the line himself before the gun went, and got disqualified, the young Briton would suffer the same fate. Both crossed the line, both were disqualified – and Scheidt won gold.

## SAILING DYNASTIES

The 1920 Games in Antwerp saw the first victory by a father-and-son pairing when Belgium's Emile and Florimond Cornellie won the 6-Metre (1907 rating) class together. Sailing's most prominent dynasty is Norway's Lunde clan. Eugen started it all off at Paris 1924, winning gold in the 6-Metre class; his son Peder and daughter-in-law Vibeke won silver in the 5.5-Metre class at Helsinki 1952, with Vibeke's brother also aboard; and grandson Peder junior won gold at Rome 1960 in the Flying Dutchman class. That made it three generations of Lundes as Olympic Games medallists. The London 1948 Star class event saw gold go to USA sailors Paul Smart and his son Hilary, with silver being won by another father and son team, Cuba's Carlos De Cardenas Culmell and Carlos De Cardenas Junior.



## BROTHERLY CREWS

Sailing has often been a family affair. At Antwerp 1920, four Norwegian brothers won gold in the 12-Metre (1907 rating) class: Henrik, Jan, Ole and Kristian Ostervold. Eight years earlier, Amédée, Gaston and Jacques Thube (France), won the 6-Metre class. Sweden's Ulf, Jorgen and Peter Sundelin (5.5-Metre class) equalled the feat at Mexico City 1968. The only gold medal-winning twins were Sumner and Edgar White (United States, 5.5-Metre class) at Helsinki 1952.

**“IN HIS EFFORTS TO GET CLEAR, SCHEIDT COLLIDED WITH AINSLIE’S BOAT BEFORE MOVING UP TO 22ND, BUT HE COULD GET NO HIGHER”**

## AINSLIE’S REVENGE

Four years after Ainslie fell into Scheidt's trap, the Sydney 2000 Laser class contest again came down to the last race, with Scheidt leading Ainslie by seven points. The only way Ainslie could win was by preventing the Brazilian from finishing 21st or better, so he harassed his opponent before the start, forcing him to commit an infraction that required a 720-degree penalty turn. Once they got underway, Ainslie blocked Scheidt's wind and repeatedly prevented him from passing, to the point where both trailed the rest of the fleet by 90 seconds. In his efforts to get clear, Scheidt collided with Ainslie's boat before moving up the field to 22nd place, but he could not get any higher and, despite filing two protests, both of which were rejected, he was disqualified and the Briton was awarded gold. Ainslie then put on 40lb as he moved up to the Finn class, in which he won gold at Athens 2004, Beijing 2008 and London 2012.

## OLDEST AND YOUNGEST

The USA's Everard Endt became the oldest gold medallist when he won the 6-Metre class in 1952 aged 59 years 112 days. The oldest winner in a single-handed race was Belgium's Leon Haybrechts, who won gold in 1924 aged 47 years 215 days. Franciscus Hin (Netherlands), who won the 12ft-Dinghy event aged 14 years 163 days in 1920 with his brother Johannes is the youngest winner.

## TWO FOR ONE

The only boat to earn two gold medals at a single Games was Scotia, crewed by Britain's Lorne Currie and John Gretton, which won the 0.5-1-Ton and Open classes at Paris 1900. The USA yacht Llanoria won the 6 Metre class at London 1948 and Helsinki 1952, skippered on both occasions by Herman Whiton.

## POWER OF EIGHT

The first woman to win a medal in Sailing at the Olympic Games was Britain's Frances Rivett-Carnac at London 1908. She was part of the gold medal-winning crew of four sailing in the 7-Metre class. The next time a woman won a gold medal at the Games was at Antwerp 1920, when another Briton, Dorothy Wright, was also part of the victorious 7-Metre class crew. Another eight years would pass before the next female medallist, France's Virginie Hériot, at Amsterdam 1928. The eight-year cycle for women winning medals continued when Sweden's Dagmar Salen was part of the bronze-medal crew of five in the 6-Metre class at Berlin 1936. After the Second World War interrupted the Olympic Games, there were no women medallists until Helsinki 1952 – again a gap of two Games. This time two women went home with medals: Norway's Vibeker Lunde won the silver medal as part of the crew of three in the 5.5-Metre class; and the United States' Emelyn Whiton was one of six crew members who took the gold medal in the 6-Metre class.



↑ Great Britain's Michael McIntyre (back) and Bryn Vaile (front) won the final race to take Star class gold at Seoul 1988.

## ZEROS TO HEROES

At Seoul 1988, Britain's Michael McIntyre and Bryn Vaile were in fourth place in the Star class going into the final race. To earn gold they needed to win it, with the US leaders, Mark Reynolds and Hal Haenel, placing no higher than sixth and Brazilians Torben Grael and Nelson Falcao no better than fifth. It was a tall order, but Fate was with the British pair. While the Brazilians finished eighth and the Americans failed to finish after their mast broke, McIntyre and Vaile duly won the race by 11 seconds. McIntyre, from Salisbury, said afterwards: 'In my wildest dreams I thought we could win – but not in any other state of mind.' It was a great victory for the Britons in what was Scotsman McIntyre's second appearance at the Olympic Games and Vaile's one and only. McIntyre had finished seventh at Los Angeles 1984 in the Finn class.



## OLDEST AND YOUNGEST

The oldest female gold medallist in Sailing at the Olympic Games was Virginie Hériot (France), who won in the 8-Metre class at the 1928 Games aged 38 years 16 days. The oldest female medallist was Pease Glaser (United States), who took silver in the 470 class at Sydney 2000, aged 38 years 314 days. The youngest female gold medallist was Kristine Roug (Denmark), who won the Europe class at Atlanta 1996 aged 21 years 141 days. The youngest female medallist was Natalia Via Dufresne Perena (Spain), who took silver in the Europe class at Barcelona 1992 aged 19.



## GOLDEN COACH

Guided by their coach, Viktor Kobalenko, the Ukraine pairing of Ruslana Taran and Olena Panholchik, 470 class bronze medallists at Atlanta 1996, won three consecutive world and European titles. But when their coach moved to Australia their form began to falter – and that of the Australian pair, Jenny Armstrong and Belinda Stowell, started to improve under his guidance. The Ukraine pair won another bronze at Sydney 2000, while the gold went to Armstrong and Stowell – who had originally come from New Zealand and Zimbabwe respectively.

## YNGLING, YNGLING, GONE...

Sarah Ayton was a member of the British crew that won the Yngling class – an event for a three-person keel boat – when it was introduced to the Olympic Games in 2004. Her partners in Athens were skipper Shirley Robertson and Sarah Webb. Four years later, at Beijing 2008, Ayton was skipper of a British crew that won Yngling gold again, this time partnered by Webb and newcomer Pippa Wilson. Having won the world title as well, the British trio were looking forward to completing a hat-trick in their home Games in 2012, but, in 2009, the International Federation dropped Yngling from the Games programme.

◀ From left to right: Shirley Robertson, Sarah Webb and Sarah Ayton celebrate their Yngling victory at Athens 2004.

## SENSINI SUPREME

A total of 90 medals have been won by women sailors at the Olympic Games, but Italy's Alessandra Sensini is the only woman sailor to have won four medals – one gold (in 2000), one silver (in 2008) and two bronzes (in 1996 and 2004).

## FROM FOUR TO THE FORE

Shirley Robertson missed out on a medal in the Europe class by just two points at Atlanta 1996. Four years later, in Sydney, she was in with a shout of gold with just two races remaining, needing to finish fourth or better in either. When she could only manage 16th place in the first of them, the pressure was on to finish ahead of Holland's Margriet Matthijssse, winner of the penultimate race. The Dutchwoman won the last race too, but Robertson finished in third place to secure gold. At the next Games, Athens 2004, the Scotswoman skippered Britain to gold in the newly established Yngling class.

## COUNTESS WITH THE MOSTEST

The first woman to compete in the Olympic Games was a sailor. When women's events were introduced at the 1900 Games – not in major sports – Hélène, Countess de Pourtalès, of Switzerland, became the first woman to make her mark as she crewed for her father, Count Hermann de Pourtalès, in the 1–2 Tonnes Sailing event. And they won, making the Countess, at 31, the oldest female gold medallist of the 1900 Games, and her father the oldest gold medallist of the Games at 53 years 55 days. However, as the 1900 races were handicapped, most observers do not consider them to have been part of the Olympic Games proper.

➔ *Hélène, Countess of Pourtalès, is credited with being the Games' first female starter. She won gold.*



## ON THE UP

In the Sailing competitions at both Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008, women represented 35 per cent of the competing athletes (139 out of 400). That represented a 32 per cent increase in women's participation since the 2000 Games in Sydney (which saw 95 out of 402).



## AINSLIE FLIES THE FLAG

Ben Ainslie, as befitting his status as the most-decorated Olympic sailor of all time, carried Great Britain's flag at the Closing Ceremony of London 2012. Ainslie's fourth gold medal, won in the Sailing men's Finn, added to the silver he had won at Atlanta 1996 and made him the first British Olympian to win medals in an individual event at five consecutive Games. The 35-year-old described his Finn class victory over Denmark's Jonas Høgh-Christensen after a week of Olympic sailing off Dorset's coast as 'the most nerve-racking race of my life'.



↓ Ben Ainslie won gold at London 2012 in the men's Finn to become Great Britain's most decorated Olympic sailor of all time.

## ALL OVER WITH OLIVIA

Spain won Match Racing gold in the women's Elliott 6m class at London 2012 after Australia lost their skipper Olivia Price overboard during a tacking manoeuvre in winds of up to 27 knots off Weymouth and Portland. The 20-year-old went over during the third of five head-to-head races. That cost the Australians crucial minutes as Nina Curtis and Lucinda Whitty hauled Price back on board. Spain, the 2011 European champions with a crew of Tamara Echegoyen Dominguez, Sofia Toro Prieto Puga and Angela Pumariega Menendez, went on to win the deciding fifth race by a clear 100 metres for a 3-2 overall success. This was Spain's second Sailing gold medal at the 2012 Games.



## KIWI POWER

At London 2012, New Zealand's Jo Aleh and Olivia Powrie fulfilled a pledge to go one better than their men by winning the women's 470 class. Aleh and Powrie left Britain's Hannah Mills and Saskia Clark behind after they had started the final medal race joint first. Mills and Clark chose the left side in the first upwind beat, while the Kiwis struck out on their own course after a slow start and stayed in front to the end. Aleh said: 'We had taken a look at the course before the race and we were pretty happy the right would be fine. We needed to strike out on our own.' Earlier in the week, Aleh had said she and Powrie would surpass the silver medal achieved by fellow Kiwis Peter Burling and Blair Tuke in the men's 49er.

← Jo Aleh (helm) and Olivia Powrie of New Zealand won the gold medal in the women's 470 class at London 2012. In the sea off Weymouth and Portland, Dorset, they outmanoeuvred Great Britain's Hannah Mills and Saskia Clark in the final medal race.



# WINDSURFER RS:X

Windsurfer RS:X is a relatively new and dynamic Olympic water sports class that combines a number of elements of both sailing and surfing and is often referred to as sailboarding, as, fittingly, it takes place on a board with a sail on it. In competitions at the Olympic Games, all competitors use identical equipment in order to ensure that everyone begins on a level playing field.

## CLOSE ENCOUNTER

Endra Ha-Tiff, of the Seychelles, almost did not make it to the start line at the 2000 Games in Sydney, having narrowly escaped with her life after a close encounter with a ferry while training in Sydney Harbour. Luckily it left her with nothing worse than a scraped knee.

## SISTER POWER

Four years after her brother Bruce, had won gold for New Zealand in the Windsurfer competition at Seoul 1988, Barbara Kendall did likewise at Barcelona 1992 to become the first female Olympic champion in her event. It was a remarkable performance by Kendall because, in early 1992, just seven months before the start of the Games, she had been thrown from a power boat, suffering a severed tendon in her arm and a broken scaphoid bone in her wrist. China's Xiaodong Zhang finished runner-up to Kendall to become the first Asian athlete to win an Olympic Games Sailing medal. Kendall went on to become the first New Zealand woman to compete at five Games, winning silver at Atlanta 1996 and bronze at Sydney 2000, before finishing fifth at Athens 2004 and sixth at Beijing 2008. She retired in 2010.

## "FITTINGLY, THE WINDSURFER CLASS EVENT WAS CONTESTED FOR THE FIRST TIME AT THE 1984 OLYMPIC GAMES IN LOS ANGELES"

## RUBBISH LUCK

Michael Gebhardt (USA) took Windsurfer class silver at Barcelona 1992 and might have won gold had it not been for a stray rubbish bag. There had been complaints before the competition got underway that the course at the Parc de Mar venue was not fit for purpose because of the amount of refuse floating in it. On the last lap of his seventh race, a bag became caught on the end of Gebhardt's board. By the time he had disentangled himself from it, the American had been passed by six rivals.



## HERMINATOR-STYLE

Christoph Sieber, Austria's unexpected winner of the event at the 2000 Games in Sydney, credited his success to the winter weight-training training he had undertaken in the snow with the Austrian skiing legend Hermann Maier.

↑ *Christoph Sieber held off Charles Espinola (Argentina, silver) and Aaron McIntosh (New Zealand, bronze) to take Windsurfing gold at Sydney 2000.*

## BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

The originator of the first sailboard is generally believed to have been an American named Newman Darby, who, as a 20-year-old in 1948, had the idea of mounting a hand-held sail onto a small catamaran. Darby, however, did not patent his idea. The first patent on a windsurfing boat was taken out by two Californians, Jim Drake and Hoyle Schweitzer, who named their design the Windsurfer. Fittingly, the Windsurfer class event was contested for the first time at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

## WIFE'S WINNING SACRIFICE

Nick Dempsey had barely collected his men's RS:X silver medal at London 2012 before acknowledging the sacrifice his wife Sarah Ayton had made so he could chase his own dream. Ayton, a double gold medallist in the Yngling class at Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008, retired at the start of 2011 to care for their son, so Dempsey could concentrate on improving from his fourth place at Beijing 2008 and bronze at Athens 2004. Dempsey said: 'I owe this all to Sarah. When she retired... a little part of it was so that I did not have to compromise. She would have won a gold medal at these Games.'



## GOING DUTCH

Holland's Stephan van den Berg, who held off the competition from home contender Randall Scott Steele off Long Beach, California, in 1984, was the first Windsurfer class gold medallist at the Olympic Games. Van den Berg was favourite to win, having been world champion for the three previous years. This was Holland's first Sailing gold since Berlin 1936, when Daniel Kagchelland had won the Finn class at Kiel. Eight years later, Van den Berg competed at the 1992 Games in Barcelona, finishing seventh.

## BREEZING IN

The Windsurfer class for men was first contested at Los Angeles 1984 and the women's event became part of the Games programme eight years later at Barcelona 1992. Different styles of board have been used at different Games. For the inaugural event at Long Beach in Los Angeles, a Windglider was used – a board 12 feet 9 inches long and 25½in wide that carried a 70sq ft sail. At Seoul 1988 and Barcelona 1992, the Lechner Division II board was chosen – a 12ft long, round-bottomed sailboard with a 78.6sq ft sail. In 1996, 2000 and 2004, the Mistral board was used, a 13ft 11in long board made of fibreglass with a sail of 79.7sq ft. In Beijing 2008 saw the introduction of the Neil Pryde RS:X board.

## HOME HEROINE

Jian Yin (who had finished second at Athens 2004) provided China with a home champion at Beijing 2008 as she held off the challenge of Sydney 2000 champion Alessandra Sensini (Italy), and won four of the event's ten races (including the first three) to take gold in the Windsurfer class. Bryony Shaw finished third to win Britain's first Windsurfer class medal at the Games and celebrated the feat by breaking down in tears.

↓ *Having picked up a silver medal in the Windsurfer class at Athens 2004, China's Jian Yin thrilled the home crowd when she took gold at Beijing 2008.*



## SAFER AT SEA

At the 1988 Games in Seoul, heavy winds gusting up to 25 knots on the fifth day of racing created waves almost two metres in height, and only 19 of the 43 men starters finished. Conditions may have favoured heavier windsurfers, but the gold went to New Zealand's Bruce Kendall, who weighed just over 10 stone. Kendall, aged 24, had encountered more difficulties on dry land, having grazed his hand badly after falling off his skateboard while listening to rock music on his Walkman. New Zealand team officials banned him from skateboarding until after the Games were over.



↑ *Dorian Van Rijsselberghe (right) was the very last Windsurfer gold medallist.*

## GOLD AND FAREWELL

Dutchman Dorian Van Rijsselberghe wrote a final page in Olympic history as last winner of gold in the Windsurfer RS:X category. Kiteboarding will replace windsurfing at Rio 2016 – and Van Rijsselberghe has already said he intends to follow the switch. The 2011 world champion scored six firsts in the ten qualifying races and was well clear by halfway. Trailing in his wake at London 2012 were Britain's Nick Dempsey (silver) and Poland's Przemyslaw Miarczyński (bronze), as well as the silver and bronze medallists at Beijing 2008, France's Julien Bontemps and Israel's Shahar Zubari.



# TARGET SPORTS

An integral part of the modern Games from the outset, target sports today encompass both Archery and Shooting

↓ Chinese shooter Dan Yu focuses into the sight of her weapon during the women's 10m Air Rifle final at London 2012. She went on to win a bronze medal, one of seven medals claimed by China in the Shooting competition.









# ARCHERY

As a military weapon, the bow and arrow dates back more than 1,000 years. King Harold of England was famously killed by an arrow fired by a Norman invader at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. As a competitive sport however, archery is believed to have begun more recently as an Anglo-French event, so it was appropriate that Archery made its Olympic Games debut at the Paris Games in 1900.

## TEAM AFTER TEAM

Archery as a team sport was added to the Games agenda at Seoul 1988 and has been dominated by South Korea's women's Archery team. From 1984 to 2012 they won 17 gold medals and retained their unbeatable tag with further gold in London. At Sydney 2000, the country's archers, inspired by Seo Hyang-Soon, won three of the four events. The team put their success down to a healthy combination of preparation, scientific training – and the right DNA! World-record holder Yoon Ok-hee claimed that Korean women were dexterous due to heightened sensitivity in their fingers.

## ACCIDENTAL OUTSIDER

There are countless examples of Olympians becoming movie stars. However, the reverse was the case in Archery when Hollywood actress Geena Davis took part in the qualifying competition for Sydney 2000. Davis competed in the semi-finals of the United States trials, but ultimately finished 24th and missed out. She said: 'This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be exposed to this amount of stress and level of competition. I just focus on my technique and don't worry about the result.'

↓ *Geena Davis, winner of the Best Supporting Actress Oscar in 1988, took part in the US trials for Sydney 2000, but missed out on selection.*



↑ *New Zealand's Neroli Fairhall made history at Los Angeles 1984 when she became the first paraplegic to appear in the Olympic Games.*

## FANTASTIC FAIRHALL

The 1984 Games in Los Angeles saw one of the ultimate examples of inspirational endeavour. New Zealand athlete Neroli Fairhall had been paralysed from the waist down in a motorbike accident. She subsequently took up archery and became the first wheelchair-bound athlete to compete at the Summer Games, finishing 35th overall. A national champion for many years, Fairhall won medals and held titles at the Paralympic Games, IPC-Archery World Championships and many international tournaments and was awarded the MBE.

## TAKING A TIME-OUT

Archery maintained a low-key presence at the 1904, 1908 and 1920 Olympic Games. However, a number of difficulties arose because there was no international consensus about the rules of the sport and so differing interpretations were used by successive host countries, with the result that Archery was banished from the Games altogether.

The emergence of the Fédération Internationale de Tir à l'Arc, in 1931, finally gave the sport some much-needed governance and, more importantly, a standard set of rules that could be adopted internationally. This paved the way for Archery's return to the Games at Munich 1972, four decades after it had originally been axed, and only then as an Individual competition. It took a further 16 years before a Team competition was contested for the first time at Seoul in 1988.



## FIZZING WITH DELIGHT

The Republic of Korea maintained its monopoly of Olympic Archery by carrying off three out of four gold medals at London 2012. But pride of place was the manner in which Jin Hyek Oh claimed the country's first men's Individual Competition gold as he defeated Japan's Takaharu Furukawa 7-1. The way had been cleared for Oh by the early-round defeat of Brady Ellison, the American favourite and world No.1. That was a twist of fate that rewarded Oh for his persistence in battling to earn a place in the Olympic squad ever since Sydney 2000. Oh also collected a Team Competition bronze, but his achievements were outdone by girlfriend Bo Bae Ki, who won gold in both the women's Individual Competition and the women's Team Competition events.

➔ *Jin Hyek Oh takes aim during the men's Individual Competition at London 2012. He won gold and later took bronze in the Team Competition.*



## GOLDEN RETURN

Korea beat China by one point to win the women's Team Competition at London 2012. It was China's third straight loss to the Koreans in gold-medal meetings. Bo Bae Ki, Sung Jin Lee and Hyeon Ju Choi scored 210 points from their 24 arrows – Ki scoring a nine with the last shot. Korean women archers have won 13 of the last 14 golds and going home without one was unthinkable. As Choi said: 'People think we should always win the women's Archery gold medal, but coming here was so difficult. The hardest part was dealing with so many changes in the weather.'

## THE MOST GOLDEN ARROW

Archery's highest-profile moment came at the climax of the Opening Ceremony at the 1992 Games in Barcelona. Billions of eyes around the world were captivated by the spectacular lighting of the Olympic Flame by an arrow fired from the bow of Spanish Paralympic archer Antonio Rebollo. He said later: 'There were no nerves: I was practically a robot, I focused on my positioning and reaching the target. Later people described to me how they saw it, what they felt, their emotions. That is what made me realise what such a moment actually meant.'



## ALWAYS ON TARGET

In the pantheon of archers at the Games, Belgium's Hubert Van Innis arguably ranks highest of them all. He won six gold medals, despite competing at only two Games. At the 1900 Games in Paris, Van Innis struck gold twice, after which 20 years passed before his next appearance. At Antwerp 1920, he showed he had lost none of his control when he won another four gold medals. After his successes in 1920, Archery was banished from the Olympic Games during his lifetime, but in 1933, at the age of 67, he was still a team winner at the World Championships.

**"BILLIONS OF EYES AROUND THE WORLD WERE CAPTIVATED BY THE SPECTACULAR LIGHTING OF THE OLYMPIC FLAME BY ANTONIO REBOLLO'S ARROW"**

## GOLDEN YEARS

Age has proved no barrier to women archers. At the 1908 Olympic Games in London, Britain's Sybil Fenton Newall (known as Queenie Newall) won the gold medal at the age of 53. Newall's score of 688 points gave her a 46-point victory over second-place finisher Lottie Dod. She remains the oldest woman ever to have won a gold medal at the Games.

⬅ *Fifty-three-year-old Queenie Newall showed the younger competitors how it was done when she took Archery gold at London 1908.*



# SHOOTING

Shooting was contested at the very first modern Games at Athens 1896 and, with the exception of St Louis 1904 and Amsterdam 1928, has been a staple feature at every Games since. The Olympic Shooting competition today comprises nine events: 10m Air Rifle, 50m Rifle Prone, 50m Rifle 3 Positions, 10m Air Pistol, 25m Rapid Fire Pistol, 50m Pistol, Skeet, Trap and Double Trap.

## OPENING SHOTS

Shooting was one of the nine events contested at the inaugural Olympic Games in Athens, in 1896. At those Games, five Sport Shooting events were contested. These took place at the newly constructed shooting range at Kallithea. They were organised and prepared by the Sub-Committee for Shooting. Some 61 shooters from seven nations competed in the five events: Military Rifle, Free Rifle, 25m Military Pistol, 25m Rapid Fire Pistol and Free Pistol. The Host Nation claimed three golds, with the United States bagging the other two.

## MIXED RESULTS

Barcelona 1992 was a landmark Olympic Games for shooting equality, as China's Zhang Shan took the gold medal in the mixed-gender Skeet competition, becoming the first woman to win a mixed event. Female shooters had been admitted to the Olympic Games only at Mexico City 1968, and it was not until 1984 that separate shooting events for women were introduced, in addition to mixed events. The International Shooting Union subsequently prohibited women from shooting against men.

↓ *Zhang Shan created a slice of history at Barcelona 1992 when she claimed Skeet Shooting gold to become the first woman in history to win a mixed event.*



## FAMILY BUSINESS

When Sweden's Oscar Swahn won silver in the Running Deer Double Shot Team event at the 1920 Olympic Games in Antwerp, he became the oldest person to win a medal at the Games. The 72-year-old had already won gold and bronze medals previously at the 1908 and 1912 Games, with his success at the latter, in Sweden, at the age of 64, making him the oldest-ever gold medallist. His appearance in 1920 broke a further record: he became the oldest athlete ever to compete at the Summer Games. His gold medal-winning son Alfred was also by his side at every team event he competed in at Antwerp.

↓ *(Left to right) Alf Swahn, Ake Lundberg, Oscar Swahn and Per Olof Arvidsson won Running Deer Double Shot silver for Sweden at Antwerp 1920.*



## PIGEON RELIEF

The Shooting contests at the 1900 Games in Paris were mired in controversy. Live pigeons were used as moving targets and it was reported that as many as 300 were shot dead. Clay pigeons were introduced in time for the following Games. The controversy did not stop there, however. Out of the 6,351 shooters listed, 96 per cent of them were from France. Also, values were compromised at the 1900 Games because prize money was awarded to virtually every winner in the Shooting events.

## SHOOTING STAR

Carl Townsend Osburn holds the distinction of being the most successful competitor in Shooting at the Games in history. Until Michael Phelps's record-breaking performance in the swimming pool, Osburn was the all-time leading male medal winner for the United States in any sport at the Games, with a tally of 11. Osburn competed between 1912 and 1924 while serving in the US Navy, in which he attained the rank of Commander. His shooting prowess saw him dominate the Shooting competition at Antwerp 1920, in which he claimed no fewer than six medals, four of them gold. Such was his dominance, he would probably have added even more medals had the 1916 Games not been cancelled.





## WILSON'S AMBITION FULFILLED

Peter Wilson's success in the men's Double Trap at London 2012 was a reward not only for the Dorset-based shooter, but also for the vision and intent behind Great Britain's Olympic Ambition programme. The scheme had been created to offer possible future Olympians the chance to 'taste' the Olympic ambience. Wilson was duly inspired and after the Athens 2004 gold medallist Sheik Ahmed Al Maktoum agreed to coach him for free, results took off. Wilson topped the British rankings, won World Cup and European Championship team silver, set a double trap world record ... and completed an impressive haul of titles with the ultimate prize – Olympic gold.

← *Peter Wilson's coach won gold at Athens 2004 and the pupil emulated the master at London 2012.*

## TEENAGE TALENT

Atlanta 1996 was the stage that produced the Olympic Games' youngest Shooting gold medallist: American Kimberly Rhode, who won the Double Trap event at the tender age of 17. She won a second gold medal at Athens 2004, but the elimination of Double Trap Shooting from the Games roster for women saw her focus on the Skeet. Having won the 2007 World Cup, during which she set a world record of 98 hits, Rhode won silver at Beijing 2008 and gold at London 2012.

↓ *Kimberly Rhode took Double Trap gold at Atlanta 1996 at only 17 years of age.*



## RECORD FOR ROSSI

Italian policewoman Jessica Rossi claimed a world record 99 out of 100 hits to win gold in the women's Trap at London 2012 – and the 20-year-old missed out on an unbeatable world mark only because she missed her 92nd shot. Slovakia's Zuzane Stefecekova took silver and France's Delphine Reau the bronze after a shoot-off. Britain's three-times Commonwealth champion Charlotte Kerwood, selected ahead of world No.4 Abbey Burton, finished 16th. Another Shooting world record – also 99 clays out of 100 – was set by American Kimberly Rhode in the women's Skeet. This was her third Olympic Games gold and her fifth medal in all. She is the only United States athlete to have won medals in an individual event at five successive Games.

## "TAKÁCS WAS RECOGNISED AS AN 'OLYMPIC HERO'"

### MAGYAR MIRACLE

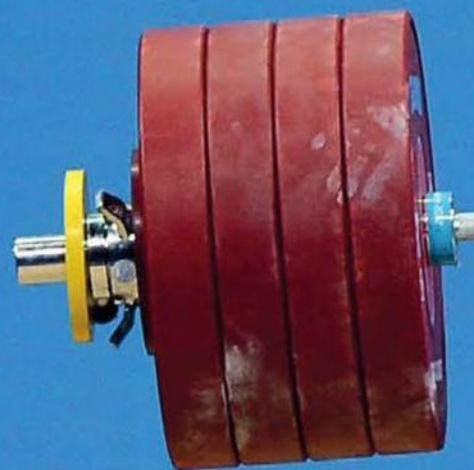
Hungary's Károly Takács, the first two-time gold medallist in the 25m Rapid Fire Pistol event, was one of the most extraordinary Shooting champions at the Games. He joined the Hungarian Army and became an expert pistol shooter. In 1938, a hand grenade accident resulted in the loss of his right hand and, it appeared, the end of his shooting career. However, Takács learned to shoot with his left hand and, in the spring of 1939, he won his national championships. At London 1948, aged 38, Takács claimed gold, a feat he repeated at Helsinki 1952. He is the first physically disabled athlete known to have competed in the Olympic Games and has been recognised as an 'Olympic hero' by the International Olympic Committee.



# WEIGHTLIFTING

An Olympic staple since 1896, Weightlifting has produced some of the most colourful moments in the Games' history

➔ *Ilya Ilyin of Kazakhstan set a new Weightlifting world record in the men's 94kg clean & jerk by lifting 233kg. His lift total of 418kg was another world record, as Ilyin successfully defended his Olympic title from Beijing 2008.*



London 2012









# WEIGHTLIFTING

The first two men's Weightlifting competitions at Athens 1896 featured no weight limits. They were introduced for the first time at Antwerp 1920, have been modified several times over the years and, since 2000, feature eight categories from 56kg to Over 105kg. Women's Weightlifting made its debut at Sydney 2000 and features seven weight categories, from 48kg to Over 75kg.

## BEATING THE SYSTEM

At Los Angeles 1932, France's Louis Hostin, runner-up in 1928, took the light-heavyweight title, finishing 5 kilograms ahead of Denmark's Svend Olsen. Hostin continued to improve and was the clear favourite at Berlin 1936. There he led his main rival, Germany's Eugen Deutsch, by 5kg on the press, and on the snatch he raised 117.5kg, with Deutsch failing to raise 110kg three times. The Germans then protested that one of Deutsch's attempts had been valid and the Jury of Appeal, under considerable pressure, allowed one effort to be ratified. The British Olympic Association's official report noted: 'This was keenly resented by many present.' However, Hostin held on for his second successive victory.



↑ Charles Rigoulet became a huge celebrity in the 1920s.

## THE STRONGEST MAN

Charles Rigoulet was one of France's most famous figures during the 1920s, not because he won the light-heavyweight title at the 1924 Games, but because of his career afterwards. In 1925, he was challenged by a professional French strongman, Ernest Cadine, a gold medallist at Antwerp 1920, for the title of 'The World's Strongest Man'. Rigoulet won. Subsequently, he became a professional wrestler, continued to train with weights, raced cars for Peugeot and was imprisoned in a concentration camp during the Second World War for hitting a German officer.



## BOWLING THEM OVER IN BOND...

Harold Sakata was one of the few weightlifters to achieve international fame, but not because of his exploits in the sport. He finished second in the light-heavyweight competition at London 1948, became a professional wrestler and went on to become the Canadian tag-team champion. However, his greatest role was still to come: he played Oddjob in the Bond film Goldfinger.

← Harold Sakata in action at the 1948 Olympic Games in London.

## WINNING GAMBLLES

Born in Israel and the son of a Brooklyn rabbi, Issy Berger won featherweight gold at Melbourne 1956 and then the world title in Stockholm in 1958. He was renowned for placing wagers on lifts and was nicknamed 'Betcha' Berger. One weight he twice failed to lift, despite impressive performances in the gym, was the 152.5 kilograms he needed to retain his title at Rome 1960, leaving the Soviet Union's Yevgeny Minayev, the only man in the competition to complete all nine attempts, as the champion.

## IF AT FIRST...

After being the first person to train at the US Olympic Center in Colorado in three different sports, Tara Nott-Cunningham finally competed at the Games in Weightlifting. The 1.54-metre-tall Texan was originally a gymnast, but had failed to qualify for the Games. Then she tried volleyball, basketball and finally football, in which she played internationally, but was not picked by the United States for Atlanta 1996. She took up weightlifting for fitness and became Pan-American champion in 1999. At Sydney 2000, she finished second in the 48kg category – becoming the first American to win a Weightlifting medal since 1960 – and was subsequently elevated to the gold-medal position.



## FAST FOOD ROUTE TO GOLD

The bespectacled American Norbert Schemansky was the first weightlifter to win four medals at the Games, as he moved between the mid-heavyweight and heavyweight divisions from London 1948 to Tokyo 1964, when he finished third at the age of 40. His career, in which he took three world titles, was interrupted by serious back injuries. 'Skee' was not helped by a diet that owed little to healthy nutrients. When once asked of what it consisted of, he replied: 'Hamburgers. Pizza. Beer.'

## CONQUERING NOT JUST ASTHMA

Born in Sacramento of Japanese extraction, Tamio 'Tommy' Kono was an asthmatic child, but, having been introduced to Weightlifting in a relocation camp during the Second World War, he became perhaps the greatest competitor the sport has ever known. Between 1952 and 1959, he won two Olympic and six world titles, in the lightweight and light-heavyweight categories.

## THE SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS

When women's Weightlifting was introduced to the Games programme at Sydney 2000, the organisers enterprisingly gave red carnations to all the female competitors and spectators. Few deserved it more than Soraya Jimenez Mendivil. The 23-year-old Mexican produced the performance of a lifetime: she managed to jerk an impressive 127.5 kilograms (15kg more than her best performance at the previous year's World Championships) to take the 58kg gold medal from North Korea's Ri Song-Hui, who failed her second jerk attempt. When asked afterwards whether females should compete in Weightlifting, Mendivil replied decisively: 'This is a sport for women. All sports are for women.'

👉 *Celebration time for Soraya Jimenez Mendivil at the 2000 Games in Sydney.*



## AMERICAN STRONGMAN

The USA's John Davis reigned supreme among weightlifters for 15 years. He won his first world title at light heavyweight in 1938, aged 17. After the war, he won two gold medals at the Games and five world super heavyweight titles, even though, at only 100 kilograms, he was much lighter than many of his opponents. In 1950, Davis lifted the famous Apollon railway axle, which had defied many people over the years, although he needed four attempts to do so because his small hands were not suited to grasping the thick bar.

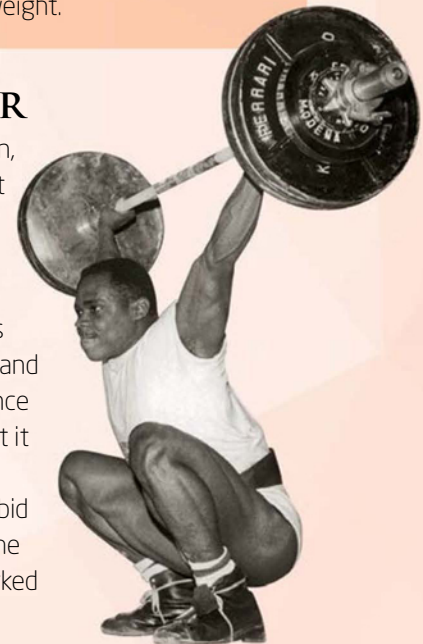
## COLD WAR WEIGHTS

When the Soviet Union competed for the first time at the Olympic Games in 1952, the Cold War was at its peak. This gave a special edge to the rivalry between the United States and the Soviets, and nowhere was this keener than in the Weightlifting competition. The light-heavyweight class in 1952 was perhaps the most controversial in the history of the sport, with Trofim Lomakin and Arkady Vorobyev trying to take away the title from the American Stan Stanczyk. There were constant protests from both sides and two judges resigned after their decisions were reversed. Lomakin eventually won, with Stanczyk second, but Vorobyev just failed with his last clean & jerk when he tried a world record lift of 170 kilograms. He got the bar to arms' length, but the sudden roar from the crowd applauding his feat seemed to unsettle him, and he dropped the weight.

## MARTIN THE MASTER

Louis Martin, who was born in Kingston, Jamaica, but who went on to represent Great Britain, was his adopted country's greatest-ever weightlifter, winning four world titles and mid-Heavyweight silver and bronze medals at the Olympic Games, at Rome 1960 and Tokyo 1964 respectively. His last chance for gold came at Mexico City 1968, but it was not to be. Trailing going into the clean & jerk, he went for 192.5kg in a bid to get the bronze medal. Three times he got up with the bar. Three times he jerked it overhead. Three times he failed.

👉 *Louis Martin won bronze at Rome 1960 and silver at Tokyo 1964 in the -90kg category.*

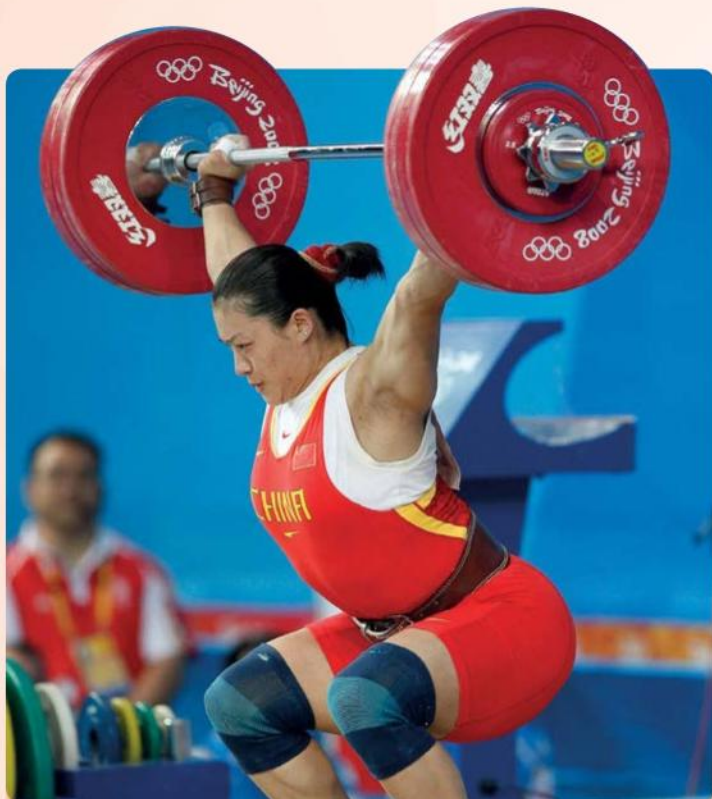


## FAMILY SUPPORT

Khadr El Touni was a decisive winner of the middleweight title at Berlin 1936, setting a world record with a lift of 387.5 kilograms. At London 1948, he discharged himself from a London hospital, to which he had been admitted, to take part in the competition and could only finish fourth. His last major victory came when he won the world title in 1950. He died six years later after electrocuting himself attempting to do a domestic repair.

**"DESPITE WEIGHING ONLY 100 KILOGRAMS, DAVIS WON TWO GOLD MEDALS AND FIVE SUPER HEAVYWEIGHT TITLES"**





↑ *Cao Lei dominated the 75kg category at Beijing 2008.*

## LEI CAO POWERS TO GOLD

China dominated the women's Weightlifting competition at Beijing 2008 winning four of the seven gold medals on offer, and the star of the show was Lei Cao. A former junior world champion and the reigning senior world champion (having taken the title in both 2006 and 2007), the 24-year-old dominated the 75kg category, setting new Olympic Games records in both the snatch and clean & jerk disciplines (with lifts of 128kg and 154kg respectively). Her total score of 282kg was also a new Games record. She may have failed with her final world-record attempt (159kg in the clean & jerk), but it mattered not: she had lifted a combined 16kg more than her closest competitor (Kazakhstan's Alla Vazhenina) to win gold.

## SALIMI THE STRONG

Iran's Behdad Salimikordasibi seized the unofficial crown as strongest man at London 2012 when the 'man mountain' won gold in the Over 105kg category. The 22-year-old 'Salimi' – already world champion – took victory with a winning total of 455kg and with two lifts to spare. His winning total comprised a 208kg lift in the snatch round and a 247kg clean & jerk. That put him 6kg ahead of training partner and fellow countryman Sajjad Anoushiravani. Together they paraded an Iranian flag in front of delighted fans. His only failure was in missing a 264kg clean & jerk, which would have taken the world record from former Olympic champion Hossein Rezazadeh, who, as Iran's Weightlifting president, was cheering him at ExCeL. The party atmosphere spread far beyond east London. Salimi said: 'In Iran I know they're all partying in the street already.'

## STRONGEST AND LONGEST

Confusion reigned briefly at Beijing 2008, when a seemingly unknown Thai weightlifter won the 53kg class – the bantamweights. Jaroenrattanakoo Prapawadee also had the distinction of having the longest name of all the competitors in the Games. However, after she had raised a total of 221 kilograms to claim gold, the truth emerged. The winner revealed that, following a run of bad luck, including not being picked for the previous Games, she had consulted a fortune-teller and was told she would be successful at Beijing 2008 if she changed her name from Kuntatean Junpim, by which she had been known earlier when she won senior and junior world titles.

## POLE'S SLIGHT DIFFERENCE

Adrian Zielinski celebrated Poland's first Weightlifting gold medal for 40 years at London 2012 thanks to the fine margin of 130 grams in terms of body weight. Zielinski and Russian Federation teenager Aпти Aukhadov tied on a total weight of 385kg in the 85kg category, but Zielinski had the advantage in build. Zielinski, world champion two years earlier, said: 'This is the fulfilment of all my dreams. I wasn't sure I would get a medal, then, in the last lift, I felt a new strength and decided to go for it.' This was Poland's first Weightlifting gold since Zygmunt Smalcerz won the men's 56kg title at Munich 1972. China's defending Olympic champion Yong Lu led after the snatch, lifting 178kg, but he failed to register a weight in the clean & jerk.

## OFF THE GOLD STANDARD

China topped the Weightlifting medals table at London 2012 with five golds, but that was a slip from eight they had won at Beijing 2008. Lulu Zhou won the country's fifth and final gold medal in the 75kg category with a world record 333kg, but still described the team's overall performance as: 'Mission unaccomplished.' Her total extended the aggregate world record of 328kg she had set at the world championships in Paris the previous November. One Chinese selection choice that misfired was that of Zhou Jun in the 53kg category though, she was not alone in underperforming. Other medal tips who also came up short with her included Dominica's Yuderqui Contreras and Turkey's Aylin Desdelen.

← *China's Lulu Zhou won gold in the women's 75kg category at London 2012.*





## ANSWER TO PRAYER

Mohamed Nassiri was Iran's first-ever Weightlifting Olympic gold medalist. A devout Muslim, he would turn his back on the spectators before each lift, pray and then call out to Imam Ali, the original leader of the Shia branch of Islam. After finishing third at the 1966 World Championships, he was set for his career-defining moment at Mexico City 1968. He managed to lift 150 kilograms in his final clean & jerk – 9kg more than the world bantamweight record – to win gold. At Munich 1972 he won the silver medal, and bronze at Montreal 1976.

## MORE WEIGHT

The supreme super-heavyweight at Beijing 2008 was South Korea's Jang Mi-Ran, who added an Olympic Games gold medal to her six world crowns. She had begun weightlifting aged 16, and in 2008 won the gold medal by 49 kilograms, setting new world records with both her snatch lift and her overall total.

## “LIU SET NEW GAMES AND WORLD RECORDS IN SNATCH IN BEIJING TO WIN THE TITLE BY 31 KILOGRAMS”

## WORTHY CONTENDER

The impressive performance of Yanqing Chen at Beijing 2008 (right) was emulated by Chinese team-mate Chunhong Liu, who won her second 69kg crown at the Games. Russia's Oxana Slivenko, the world-record holder in snatch, had been expected to challenge Liu, but the Chinese competitor set new Games and world records – not bothering with her final clean & jerk – to win the title by 31 kilograms, with a total of 286kg. The official magazine of the International Weightlifting Federation suggested she was a worthy contender to be considered the best woman lifter of all time.

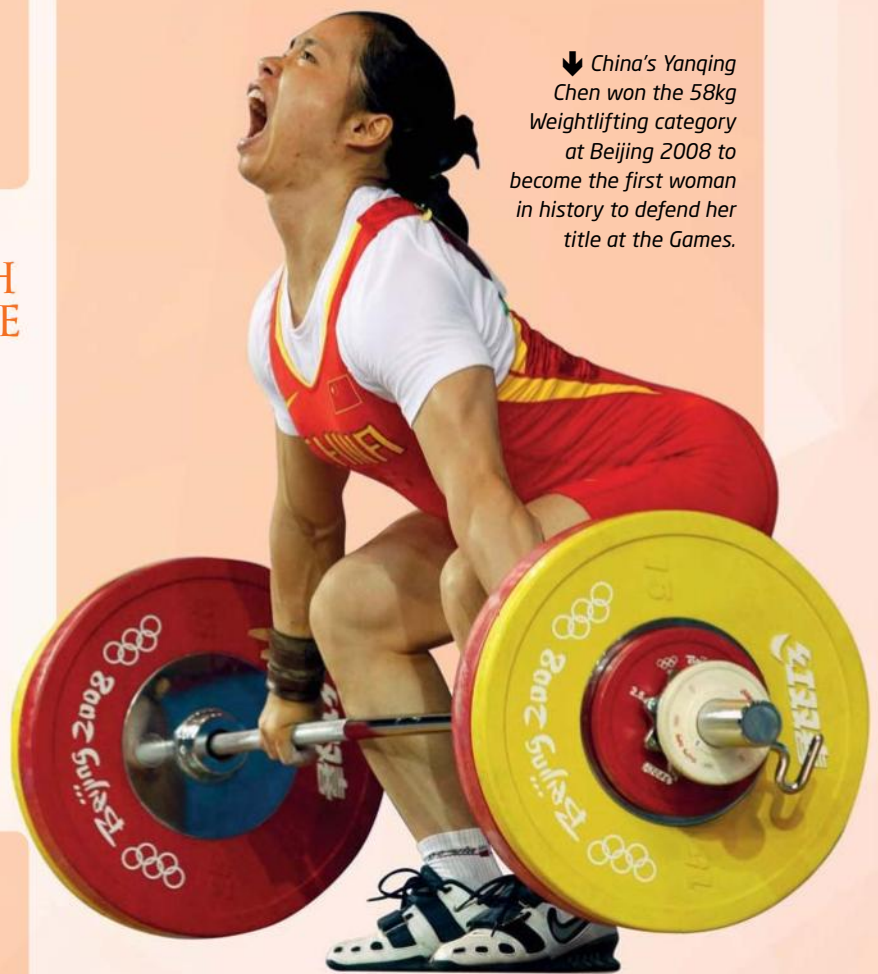
## SMITH WEIGHS IN

Britain's Zoe Smith has helped to changed a number of long-held perceptions of women's Weightlifting. Smith was not expected to win a medal her home games at London 2012, but, at 18, was there for the experience. Despite this, she finished a commendable 12th in the 58kg competition. She struggled initially with 93kg, before ultimately having the personal satisfaction of beating Michaela Breeze's eight-year-old British record of 120kg. 'I didn't really do myself justice,' insisted Smith who had battled against a love of fast food and chocolate in the past, as well as with social media attacks. She said: 'I gave them the verbal kicking they deserved, basically. "What are you doing with your life? I've just competed at the Olympics!"'

## NOW YOU SEE HER...

Beijing 2008 witnessed one of the outstanding Weightlifting feats in history, when China's Yanqing Chen retained her Olympic Games title to become the first woman in history to win two Weightlifting gold medals at the Games. This was the climax of an international career that had begun 11 years earlier, in 1997, when she won the world middleweight title. Despite winning the lightweight crown two years later, she was not picked for the 2000 Games in Sydney, but came back at Athens 2004 to win her first Olympic Games gold medal. However, after the Asian Games in Doha, she had another period away, taking a BSc in psychology, before returning successfully to claim gold once again.

↓ China's Yanqing Chen won the 58kg Weightlifting category at Beijing 2008 to become the first woman in history to defend her title at the Games.



## HE'S SO PRECIOUS

Born in South Africa in 1936, the baby McKenzie was so tiny that doctors thought he would not survive, so he was named Precious. As an adult, Precious McKenzie – who stood 1.45m (4ft 9in) tall – was not allowed to lift in his homeland, so he moved to England and represented Great Britain at the 1968, 1972 and 1976 Olympic Games, without winning any medals. He did, however, win four gold medals for two countries at the Commonwealth Games: for England at Bantamweight in 1966 and 1970 and Flyweight in 1974; and at Bantamweight for New Zealand – to where he had emigrated – in 1978.



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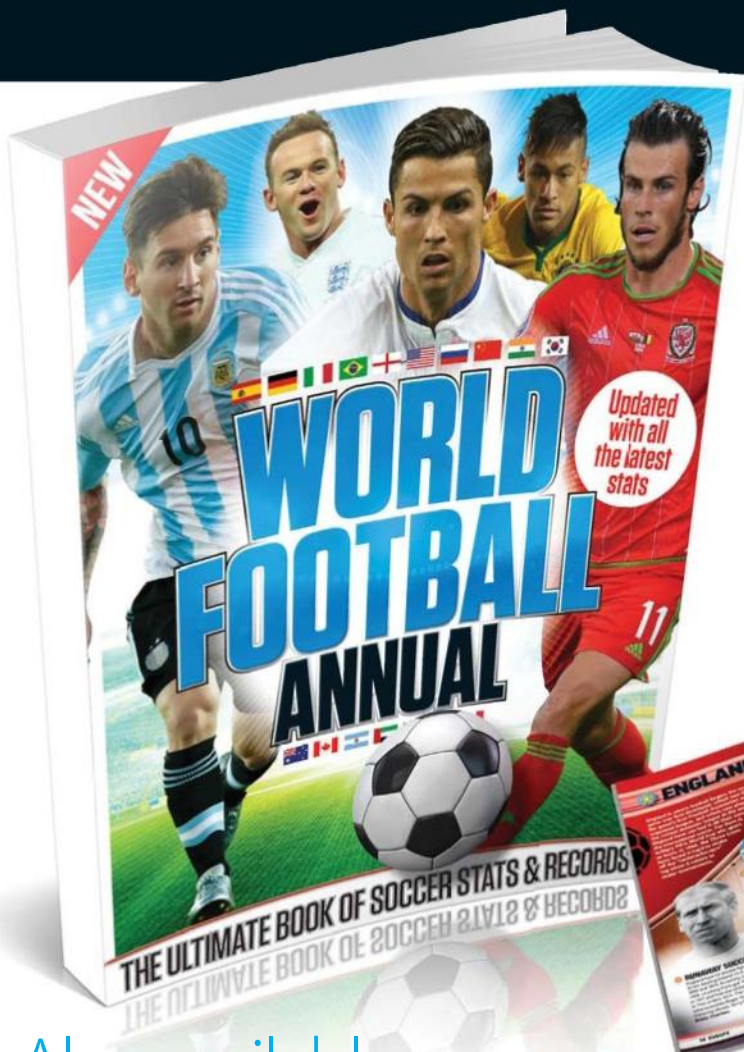
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◀ Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt wrote his name in the history books at London 2012 when he retained his 100m and 200m Olympic titles.



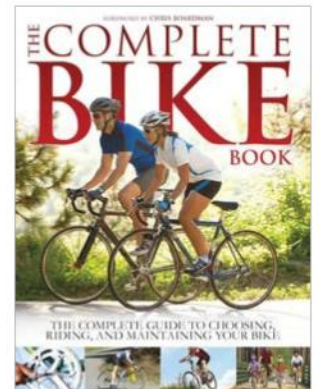
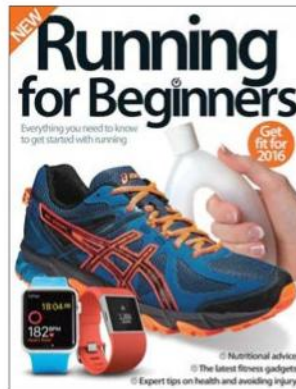
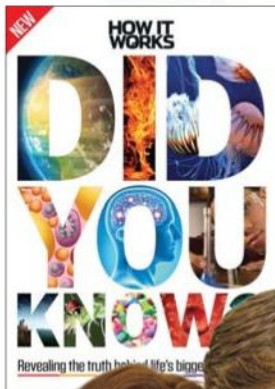


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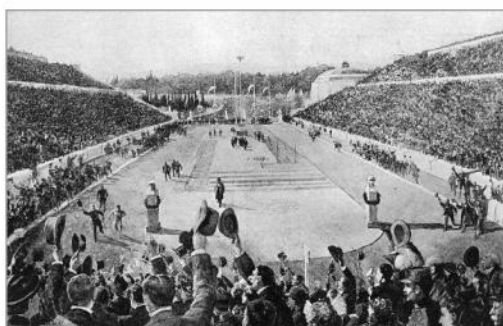




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